



THE
MASQUERADE.

V O L. I.



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Print

THE
MASQUERADE;

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF

LORD AVON

AND

MISS TAMEWORTH.

IN A SERIES OF BETTERS.

V O L . I .

L O N D O N ,

Printed for ROBINSON and ROBERTS, at No. 25, in
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V O L I

L O N D O N

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MDCCCXIX.

THE MASQUERADE.

LETTER I.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

SUCH a transporting adventure, Ned! why were you not in town; and how could you, possibly, contrive to be at a distance from the capital, when so brilliant an entertainment was to be given:—by a youthful monarch too; from the generosity of whose disposition, and from the elegance of whose taste, you might be assured of seeing that entertainment in its highest perfection?

But, to my own share in it,

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As

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As I have no passion for these extravagant diversions, which may be called, not improperly, I think, ridiculous, you may suppose that I was not in the least inclined to enter into the true spirit of a masquerade. I would not, indeed, take the trouble or be at the expence of appearing in any particular character : and, therefore, only dressed myself in a domino. I went later than the rest of my acquaintance to the Opera-house ; so that before I got thither most of the company were unmasked.

I was, I confess, unexpectedly struck with the magnificence of the decorations, and the taste as well as richness displayed in the dresses around me. For a-while my attention was distracted, by the variety of figures on all sides, but it was soon fixed.— So beautiful a young creature I never beheld !—my ravished eyes were rivetted on her—nor was I singular with my looks ; the whole room gazed at her with admiration. She was formed in the most delicate style to be conceived, and her face was animated

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mated by a clear and glowing complexion. Her dark eyes now dazzled you with their brightness, and now melted your soul with their bewitching languor. She had fine auburn hair, long thick eye-lashes of the same hue, a Grecian nose, and a mouth—I will not attempt to describe her mouth, conscious of my inability to do it justice with the utmost exertion of my descriptive powers. But after all I have said about her personal charms, they would have been insufficient to captivate my heart, without some sweet accompaniments, which rendered them still more enchanting!—a good understanding and a good heart were strongly visible in her expressive countenance; and when I conversed with her, the graceful simplicity in her language, and the melody of her voice, almost drove me out of my senses. I was for some moments lost in rapture—Do I not write like one of the enamoured train?—I have not, however, told you yet how I came to be so soon acquainted with all these charms.—

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Hold—I must in the first place, describe her dress.

She was in a plain white lutestring kind of jacket and petticoat, which shewed the symmetry of her shape to the greatest advantage ; it was buttoned down with diamonds before, and at the wrists ; while the softest, whitest hand in the world, and a neck as white and as polished, were adorned with the finest lace. Her hair, which grew very luxuriantly, was partly turned up : the remainder of it was unconfined ; that in front strayed over her snowy forehead, that behind waved on her neck, in careless ringlets, only discoverable thro' a veil of transparent gauze, spotted with silver, which she sometimes permitted to obscure her beauties for a moment, as if she studied to quicken the eagerness of her beholders.—When she threw it back on a sudden, she seemed to emerge like the sun, from a cloud, to appear with redoubled splendor.

Guests

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Guess my surprize, when I found, upon enquiry, that she was niece to Sir William Tameworth, whom he had just brought up from Derbyshire, designing her for his son, hourly expected from his travels!—You cannot imagine, Mountney, how this intelligence alarmed me.—I had heard much of this Miss Tameworth's being a very fine girl, tho' I never saw her before. She is the only daughter of Sir William's eldest brother, who died without a male heir. Her fortune is thirty thousand pounds—Her uncle has just brought her to town; she was never in London before, having lived with her grandfather since the death of her father. Her first appearance in public was on the above-mentioned remarkable night.

I was, as I said before, alarmed; I was indeed excessively shocked at hearing that a creature, who had made such an impression upon my heart in so rapid a manner, should be already destined to a man, of whom she, according to my intelligence,

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knew very little, as they had been educated at a distance from each other, and in a very different style: the one in retirement, and the other in the world.

As soon as I began to converse with this angel, having introduced myself by renewing my acquaintance with lady Tameworth, with whom my family were once upon an intimate footing, I grew half mad to think that I might never have another opportunity to speak to her again, with the same freedom, as her cousin was expected every hour; and as the marriage was to be celebrated immediately upon his arrival.

Whether the racking disquietude of my mind was visible in my face, I cannot affirm, but this lively girl's bewitching familiarity, (bewitching from the innocence of it!) increased my passion for her to such a degree, that the thoughts of only parting with her at the breaking up of the house, gave me inexpressible uneasiness: but the dread of losing her for ever, became almost insupportable

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portable — I, therefore, endeavoured to make some efforts to move her heart in my favour. Had she not been thus kept up on purpose for George Tameworth, my rank and fortune would have given me the fairest pretensions to demand her of her uncle; but I well know that Tameworth is too much bent on money, to let a thirty thousand pounder go out of his family. What, then, was to be done? Something was to be done directly—not a single moment was to be lost. I had not even time nor opportunity to win her over to my party—general gallantry was only in my power, while the eyes of the admiring crowd were fixed on so new and so bright a divinity.

In consequence of repeated disappointments, I slipped out of the room, and having given proper instructions to Bingley, who has, you know, attended me from my infancy, and who has been a very serviceable fellow to me on many occasions, returned to the blooming Eudocia, for so

B 4

lady

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lady Tameworth called her lovely niece—I then plied her ladyship with a profusion of flattering civilities, and engaged colonel Edwards also, (who was of my party for the evening) to treat her with as much gallantry as he could possibly lavish upon her.

Lady Tameworth is still a fine figure, and infinitely more vain and giddy than many women not half so old—She was, therefore, highly pleased with Edwards' assiduities, who paid them very chearfully, as he is never, he says, more agreeably employed than when he is humming an old toast; that is, in making her believe he is extremely smitten with her; and as he thought, that I only desired him to engage the old one, in order to have a little conversation with the young one. I certainly requested his assistance with that view, tho' I said nothing to her during the evening which required a whisper, to prevent suspicion; and even forbore, earnestly as I longed, to dance with her, because

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cause I would not appear too particular; yet I hovered about her in such a manner, that I kept all my rivals at a distance, according to my wishes.—The sweet girl contributed to my satisfaction, by the envied preference she seemed to give me.

Oh! Mountney! Never was there such an angelic creature.—

When the time of their departure from the house drew near, I only begged she would permit me to conduct her to her chair. She put her hand into mine, with a look expressive of so much pleasure and confidence, that I actually trembled at feeling that I was going to deceive her—yet there was no other way left. I had nothing for it but to make a bold push, or to lose her for ever.

“I will follow with your niece,” said I, in a whisper to lady Tameworth, who was led out by Edwards.

I did so, but my lovely charge was by my direction put into a chair, which Bing-

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ley had secured, and which was guarded by people in my service.

I kept close behind in another.

We were soon set down in a private street—my post-chariot waited, with two servants armed, tho' a few yards off.

Quitting my own chair, and advancing to that which contained my charming prize, I offered my hand to assist her in stepping into the chariot.

“Where are we going, my lord?” said she, looking upon me with an unsuspecting smile.

“You shall know in a moment, madam,” said I, lifting her into the carriage: “but don’t stop, you will take cold coming out of so crowded a house.”

I then seated myself by her side, drew up the glasses, and held her soft hand in mine, which trembled excessively; so fearful was I lest we should be discovered and overtaken! still more fearful lest she should be displeased at my daring attempt, and unhappy in being decoyed in such a manner

THE MASQUERADE. II

manner from her relations. I told her what I felt the first moment I beheld her, and to what a pitch my despair rose, when I found, upon enquiry, that she was destined to the arms of another man—adding, that I had no other way to alleviate the misery, which I endured on such killing intelligence, but to secure her person; swearing solemnly, at the same time, that she should be thrown into no disagreeable, no dangerous situation, but treated with the utmost kindness, consideration, tenderness and respect; and concluding with assuring her, that I had taken so irregular a step only to have an opportunity of prostrating myself at her feet, and to endeavour by every assiduous attention, to please her, to charm her, and to win her to return my love.—

But I hear her voice—I must lay down my pen—The continuation of my narrative in my next.

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LETTER II.

From the same to the same.

I LEFT off at the conclusion of my first address to my lovely girl, who sat surprised, indeed, yet seemingly fearless, by my side—She looked on me—(for it began to be day-break, and there was light enough for us to see each other)—She looked at me with astonishment; but no displeasure appeared in her love-inspiring eyes.—She only replied, “What will Sir William and my lady say to this? and how do you expect to escape their resentment, supposing you were certain of not incurring mine?”

“I trust entirely to your mercy and your pity, my charming Miss Tameworth,” said I, “for your pardon; and as to your family, when you are firmly mine by all the ties of love and honour; they may be offended

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fended for a short time, but not all the powers on earth can disunite us, if you will only consent to let me call you my wife.—My birth and fortune are not, indeed, to be put in competition with your uncommon attractions.—I only mention them, as they, possibly, would procure me the approbation of your uncle and aunt, were they not already prejudiced in favour of their son; but if he has not yet gained your heart, may I not, from my constant, my unwearied sollicitude to please you, hope to make, one day, an impression upon it?"

"You will stand the fairest chance of succeeding with me, my lord," replied she with spirit, "by carrying me back to my uncle, and asking his permission to see me, and then leaving it to me to determine."

"Heaven, who knows the sincerity of my intentions," answered I, "knows also that your uncle will reject every offer, in order to make way for his son; and that, if I carry you back, I must never hope

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to see you again, but in the arms of another."

"He cannot oblige me to marry," said she, "without my consent."

"He has great power, my adorable Miss Tameworth," said I; "you are not of age; your uncle has, consequently, all the right of a parent and guardian over you: and if I restore you to him, he will certainly not only refuse my offers, but avail himself of the step I have taken, to forbid you the sight of me for ever—And can I, possibly, my lovely Eudocia, added I, pressing her hand, support such a prohibition?"

She surveyed me again attentively, yet not with any apparent displeasure—Something like a heavenly smile overspread her fine features—But, tho' I continued to urge her to listen to me, I obtained no satisfactory reply—she did not, however, look either offended or disconcerted; secure in her own unfulled innocence she sat unmoved: while I redoubled my attention

to

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to render her little journey as agreeable as possible, to which she made no opposition.

“ Whither, in the name of wonder, did you carry her ?”

Why to Sedley's; he purchased a house, you know just before he went to Paris, a few miles from town, when he left directions with his people to have it repaired and ornamented to his own taste; he desired me to stop, on riding that way, and look at it. I had taken a view of it more than once, and finding it fit for his reception, seized the fortunate moment of his absence, to carry my new-found treasure thither; as we should be much less suspected than at either of my own houses.

At this place, then, we arrived—I led my charming companion into a parlour, to which all kinds of refreshment were immediately brought—I begged her to take some that she liked best, and at the same time told her a servant waited to conduct her to an apartment, proper for her repose, when she chose to retire; as I
was

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was afraid that she very much wanted rest. I intreated her also to look upon herself, as mistress of the house, and every thing about her; particularly of me, as she had an absolute power over me, and all in my possession.

She drank one dish of tea, and ate a little piece of bread and butter; but seemingly with composure.

When I rang the bell for a servant to attend her, I told her that I hoped she would find every thing as agreeable as I wished.

She left me with a half smile, which added a thousand beauties to her already but too lovely face.

When Loyd, my house-keeper in town, whom I had ordered by Bingley to attend here, returned to me, after having undressed her, she informed me that she said little, but appeared to be in a flutter of spirits—"She is the sweetest young creature," added Loyd, "that I ever beheld with my eyes."

I went

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I went to bed, and endeavoured to calm my agitated mind, but I could not sleep. My impatience to see her again—the dear cause of all my anxiety, would not suffer me to close my eye-lids—I quitted my pillow, therefore, much sooner than I had intended, and spent the time in dressing myself to the greatest advantage.

While I was so employed, I recollected that this dear girl, whom I had hurried away from her family, had no change of linnen or cloaths—She had only her masquerade dress; which, tho' infinitely becoming, might not, I thought, be the dress she would chuse to put on when she waked; accordingly I made Loyd send one of the men immediately to town, with necessary orders.

It is impossible for me to describe the eagerness with which I waited for her rising—It was full seven in the morning, before she was in a situation to take any rest—She was not awake at five in the afternoon. The dear angel, believing herself

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self to be thoroughly safe, had not fastened her door; Loyd, who waited in the dressing-room, peeped several times into her chamber, and told me that she was in a profound sleep.—I was glad, indeed, to hear such intelligence, as she would, I hoped, recover from her fatigues; but I could not settle to any thing, so very much did I long to see her, to listen to her sweet accents, and to endeavour to make her sensible of what I felt on her account.

She waked between five and six, and discovered some confusion and surprize at first—

On a sudden she cried, “Oh! I recollect now.”

Then, expressing a desire to rise, Loyd assisted her to put on her things: and in about half an hour she broke in upon me, as I sat in the parlour, in the full lustre of her beauty.

A modest blush crimsoned her lovely face, while I advanced to lead her to a chair.

“I hope,

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“ I hope, madam, that you are a little refreshed, and beg to know what kind of repast will be most agreeable to you?”

She smiled, with a peculiar archness in her looks.

“ I think, my lord, we have turned day into night : yet, certainly on our first rising, a breakfast is the most natural refreshment.—To what are you most inclined yourself?”

So charming, so amiable a condescension, must have compleated the conquest of my heart, had it not been already in her possession. I could not forbear taking her snowy hand in mine ; pressing it ardently to my lips, I told her that my choice would be determined by her, and led her to the breakfast parlour ; in which I had the satisfaction to see her eat with as good an appetite, and to appear with as much ease, as if she had been surrounded by her own family.

Never was there so beautiful a creature—What enchanting simplicity !—not
the

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the least affectation did she discover : not the least apprehension—She only looked innocently at me now and then ; while lost in transport, at seeing her so unexpectedly composed, I feasted my eyes with her whole figure ; which grew, I thought, more and more beautiful after every survey of it.—She had, somehow, contrived to keep her hair pretty much in the form it was before she went to bed ; she had only, instead of wearing the silvered gauze as a veil, twisted it in the shape of a turban, leaving the ends to hang carelessly down her neck.—By this new disposition, she gave her face a more majestic air, and threw indeed a dignity over her whole person, which made it exquisitely attractive.

As to myself, dissolved in admiration, I forgot to eat and drink, to do any thing, indeed, but wait on her. She took notice, however, of my inattention to the scene before us, and had the good nature to ask me if I was ill.

“ You

“ You alone, madam,” replied I, “ engross my thoughts—if you can find any thing you like, I shall be happy : and I flatter myself, from the delightful serenity of your behaviour, that you are not totally displeased with me for what I have done—I even venture to beg your permission, to hope that your residence with me, will give you, one day, as transporting a satisfaction as I, this moment, receive from it, and as I must ever receive from it.”

“ I can say nothing to that, my lord, till I have heard my uncle’s opinion : he, alone, has a right to dispose of me.”

“ I am but too sensible of his authority, my charming Miss Tameworth,” said I : “ but tho’ he has, undoubtedly, a right to give his opinion, he has none to direct your choice ; nor is it in the power of our relations to make us like or dislike, just as they please ; tho’ they influence or prejudice us greatly by their persuasions and admonitions.—Only, therefore, give me the slightest reason to hope that I may, possibly,

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possibly, be so fortunate as to render myself agreeable to you; only tell me that you do not hate me, my lovely Eudocia, added I, pressing her hand, with an impassioned look in which my fond soul's every ardent wish was, I am sure, strongly painted, and I will be satisfied, till you are inclined to grant me more substantial indulgences."

She fixed her lovely eyes steadfastly on me when I began to open my lips, but towards the conclusion of my speech, threw them down: a gentle sigh heaved her snowy breast. Looking up again, she with an enchanting smile, replied, "I do not hate you, Sir: I do not hate any body: you may, therefore, banish all fears of that kind."

"Perhaps, then," said I, eagerly, "perhaps you love your cousin George?"

"How!" answered she, with the most bewitching vivacity, "must we always necessarily love those whom we do not hate?—however, with regard to my cousin,

I cer-

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I certainly feel neither affection nor abhorrence. I have not seen him since I was ten years old ; and the last time I saw him was six years ago—You cannot, therefore, suppose that I should be violently in love with him.”

“ Not in love with him at all, I hope, my angel—Let me by my unwearied efforts to gain your dear innocent heart, make the attempts of every man who would soften it in his favour, unsuccessful. Did you but know how fervently I wish to make your heart throb with emotions responsive to mine ; could you but conceive what torments I shall feel, if I am not blest with the completion of my wishes ; you would, I dare be certain, commiserate my situation.”

Here I stopped ; waiting for her answer.

Her enchanting eyes were, a second time, directed to the floor—Then, gently withdrawing her hands, which I held, and turning her face towards me, which had been for some moments averted, she said,

“ I am

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“ I am going to write to my uncle—when I receive his answer, I will tell you what I think.”

Alarmed, beyond expression, at that answer, I cried, “ For heaven’s sake, my dearest angel, don’t destroy me at one blow : don’t crush my fond hopes, before you allow me time to gain your esteem—If you write to Sir William, madam, I am for ever lost—He must, then, know where you are ; he will, of course, tear you from me, and I must be eternally miserable.

I spoke with energy, for my heart was on my lips. I felt myself excessively disordered—I let her hand, which I had again seized, drop, and could not support the agitation into which she had thrown me.—I rose up to walk about the room, that I might stifle my emotions ; but I could not get the better of them.—I returned, and flinging myself at her feet, begged with all the eloquence I was master of, not to drive me to despair—“ Allow me but time,” said I—“ You do not yet

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yet know the man whom you would render everlastingly wretched—Could you but see my heart, which beats for you alone; a heart never touched by love before—could you but be sensible with what respectful tenderness I adore you, surely you would not distract me in this cruel manner—

Perceiving the tremor I was in, she kindly raised me from the ground, by extending her hand, and desired me to sit by her.

I did so, pursued my purpose, and strove to melt her soul to pity and to love.

She heard me with attention, and then replied, with an ineffable sweetness, "Well, my lord, if my writing to Sir William will give you so much uneasiness, I will relinquish my design; but I must send a letter to a friend I have in Derbyshire, to whom I promised to write, as soon as I got to London."

Again I trembled.

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“ May I presume,” said I, kissing her dear hand, which she did not withdraw, “ may I, after so obliging a compliance, ask if your friend is of your own sex?— And dare I hope, also, that you will not drop the least hint about the place at which you at present reside. I could with more composure bear the stroke of death, than the loss of your society.”

She smiled in a manner, which made her look doubly alluring—“ You shall see the direction of my letter,” said she, “ tho’ I assure you it will be to a female friend : and as to the discovery of the place, to which you have brought me, it is entirely out of my power ; for I am totally a stranger to the spot.—But I will go up stairs, and write now.”—

I let her go, tho’ I could have detained her for ever ; and tried to amuse myself, in her absence, with a book.—I could not read—I, therefore, sat down to write to you—As Sedley will, I know see you, as soon as he comes from Paris, shew him
what

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what I have already written, and tell him that I must borrow his house for a while; tell him at the same time, however, that I cannot suffer him to see Eudocia, till I have made her mine by the strongest, by indissoluble ties.

C 2 LETTER

LETTER III.

From the same to the same.

WHILE my angel was busy with her pen, I revolved in my mind every thing that had passed between us; and upon the strictest scrutiny into Eudocia's behaviour, began to think that it was rather, on the whole, encouraging than forbidding; more calculated to inspire me with hope, than to depress me with despondence.—The result of this scrutiny threw my spirits into such an agreeable agitation, that I hurried to meet her, when she came down to supper, with transport, which seemed to be participated.

I ventured to complain of the disquietude which she, by absenting herself so long from me, had made me endure.

She smiled, and, with a lively air, holding out her letter, said, “This is my apology”—

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logy"—“There,” continued she, seeing me look earnestly at it; “there is the address, my lord.”

I caught it, and having pressed it to my lips, read, in the prettiest hand; “To Miss Olivia Heber.”

“Will you not favour me with the care of it, my dearest angel?”—

“May I trust you;” said the charming girl, with a laugh—

“By all my hopes of happiness you may—If you have kept your word with me, you may depend upon my honour.”

“There, then—but let it be sent directly.—Hold—I will not deceive you—I have told to what place to send an answer.”

“How,” cried I, starting with surprise, “you do know, then, where you are.”

“No, indeed,” replied she, colouring, and looking as if she wished I would believe her: “but I have heard my uncle mention a coffee-house which he uses, and I desired Olivia to direct for me at it.”—

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See, Ned, see how ready a woman's invention is!—Yet with what an innocent countenance, in which appeared a timid apprehension, lest she should have made me uneasy, did she look up in my face; and with what a pretty mincing voice did she say, “I thought you could send somebody to fetch my letter from that coffee-house, who might not be known even to the people belonging to it—and I have ordered her to direct only to A. B.,” continued she, blushing excessively.

“My charming Miss Tameworth,” said I, snatching her to my bosom, in spite of her resistance, “You have given me new life.—But where, my dear Eudocia, did you learn so much contrivance? Surely you have already had a favoured lover, and he has taught you so much ingenuity.”

“No, indeed,” answered she, quite abashed,—“but my grandfather had the newspapers sent down to him, and I have often seen advertisements about letters, which were written by people who signed only initials.

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initials. I therefore thought I might avail myself of that manner of writing, in order to keep my word with you, and at the same time, not deny myself the pleasure of hearing from my friend."

"Sweet girl," exclaimed I, pressing her again to my bosom—"how exquisitely good; how shall I return my acknowledgments!"

"By letting me go," said she, breaking from me with a delicious confusion, "and by not expecting more from me than you ought."

I complied immediately: she then sat down to supper, with a cheerfulness and ease in her manner which filled me with ecstatic sensations, and entered into the most lively and agreeable chat imaginable.—When I, however, almost transported out of myself, ventured to mention my passion, and to engage her to promise to be only mine; she put me by, and made my importunity an excuse for her retiring earlier than she would, I believe, other-

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wife have done.—Yet she parted not from me in anger—She offered me her hand, at my request, when I wished her a good night.

Now, Ned, laying all things together, I grow more and more animated by hope.—If, after all, I should never be able to win,—to keep her heart!—I dare not run my thoughts that way—“that way madness lies.”

LETTER

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LETTER IV.

Miss TAMEWORTH to Miss OLIVIA HEBER.

WHAT difficulties have I surmounted, in order to keep my promise to you!—But the strangest affair has happened. I actually don't know whether I have spirits left to tell you—However, I'll see what I can do—

Two days after my arrival in Hill-Street, all the world was preparing to go to the king of Denmark's masquerade—Not a creature came to my uncle's who did not talk of dresses and tickets, and being squeezed to death, to my aunt, who was as much engaged upon the occasion as any girl could possibly have been in contriving a fancy-dress for an entertainment, which was to be so elegant and superb.—You must know, now, that I was as wild to go as the rest; but being, in a manner, a

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stranger to my lady, I was afraid to ask for such a favour—

On the morning of the very day, while my uncle and aunt were sitting after breakfast, talking of who was and who was not to be at the ball, with major Walworth, a friend of my uncle's, one of the best natured old men you ever saw ; I ran up stairs to fetch something for my lady. Seeing her dress, which had been just brought home, spread out upon the back of a sofa by Mrs. Crofts, her woman, who was admiring it ; I caught it up, and throwing it over my shoulder, (at the same time taking off my cap, twisting a piece of gauze which lay on her dressing-table round my hair, and putting on my aunt's mask) walked down to the parlour, laughing all the way to think how they would stare.

When I opened the door my lady screamed ; Sir William laughed heartily ; and the major, twitching off my mask, said

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said to my lady, "You see, madam, how well she becomes her dress."

"Bless me, child," cried my aunt, "what have you done? you will tumble my domino—run—run and pull it off."

"Let her rather wear it for life," replied the major, "for she looks excessively well in it.—

"Do I,—indeed?—Why then my dear uncle," said I, advancing to him, and tapping his cheek, "if I had such another I would go along with you:" that is, added I, looking very demure, and making a low curtsy to her, "if my lady is pleased to let me."

"My lady must let you," said the major: "'tis an amusement only fit for such pretty young creatures—Come, madam," continued he, turning to her ladyship, "order a dress for her: she may never have an opportunity of seeing so fine a sight again."

"Fie, major," replied my good aunt, "you will absolutely spoil the girl."

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My uncle called me a coaxing little huffey.

In short, my lady was so strongly intreated to take me with her to the Hay-market, that she, at last, consented; and I flew up stairs after her, to consult about my dress, which was to be as slight as possible, that it might be the sooner finished. The habit-maker was sent for, and a white lutestring jacket, with a veil of spotted gauze, were, at last, pitched upon. I happened to have some diamond buttons which had been my mother's; I was quite delighted with the thoughts of shining away with them, and wished for the evening with an impatience not to be described.

And now, my sweet Olly, suppose me just entered into the house—Never was any creature more astonished and charmed than I was at that juncture — The splendor which surrounded me far exceeded all my conceptions about it; and the brilliant, the magnificent appearance
which

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which the company made, more than dazzled my eyes; it almost deprived me of my senses. I never expected to have seen such an enchanting paradise on earth—I saw a thousand charming figures—I heard a thousand clever things,—I did not know which way to turn myself.

When the company unmasked, in compliment to the illustrious entertainer, I beheld a vast number of sweet faces among the women, and was crowded by a herd of agreeable men, who strove to vie with each other in bestowing encomiums on my person and dress—I grew quite giddy with their praises, and endeavoured to make proper replies.

All at once a tall graceful figure, in a blue domino, with a black hat, ornamented with a large diamond in the front, and a white plume of feathers which waved over his fine face, came forward; and on seeing me, stopped short, with his eyes fixed in so particular a manner, that he actually disconcerted me.—The first view
of

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of this fine fellow had, indeed, made me unaccountably curious to examine his features with more accuracy ; but when I lifted up my eyes, in order to enjoy that satisfaction, he was still looking on me with so much attention, that I was obliged to throw them down.—I thought I had been too free with my glances, and I felt my face in a monstrous glow.—Once more, however, urged by curiosity, I ventured to take another peep at him—His eyes were, then, modestly cast down, and he turned away as if he was ashamed of having almost stared me out of countenance.

Before I had time to reflect much upon my behaviour, he joined my aunt, and was presented to me by the title of lord Avon :—But I shall never do justice to his first overtures towards a conversation—His carriage was so genteel, and there was such a delightful but respectful freedom and ease in his manners, that the moments flew away like lightning, while he spoke ;
and

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and I was so captivated by his conversation, that I could hear no voice but his ; which was, indeed, most bewitchingly harmonious.—He was prodigiously attentive to all my looks, to my every motion, and seeming to read my wishes in my eyes, made a considerable addition to the pleasure which I received from the scenery around me, by his entertaining communications concerning several of the principal personages in the room.

His behaviour, upon the whole, was in the highest degree, insinuating and prepossessing, but there were some parts of it which puzzled me—he heard numbers ask me to dance, without making the least offer of his hand to me ; and as I had never danced in publick, I chose to refuse every body else—He left me, too, for so long a time, that I thought I should never see him again—

To own the truth, Olivia, I could not help regretting his absence—I felt pretty much as I used to feel when you and our
dear

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dear Alicia have been gone from me for a whole day.—I was restless ; I was uneasy : I wished anxiously for his return—My roving eyes wandered no longer in search of new amusement : they were rivetted to the spot which he had quitted, and on which I longed—Oh ! how I longed !—to see him.

The men still chatted to me, and talked of my eyes and my lips, and my teeth and my hair ; of the brilliancy of my complexion, and the sweetness of my smiles—but I scarce attended to them ; they had, at first, given me a great deal of delight ; but their compliments, by being often repeated, with few variations, were rather disgusting than flattering to my wearied ears.—I began to grow serious ; not to say peevish—I was also fatigued—I did not know what I would have.

When I had been in this uncomfortable way for some time, I saw lord Avon pressing thro' the crowd to meet me, with an eagerness which revived all my good-hu-

mour

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mour and gaiety in a moment. I laughed, I chatted again with the same sprightliness as before; every thing about me had a more spirited appearance, and I could have staid all night in so charming a place.

While I was enjoying the animated evening with increased satisfaction, my aunt mentioned going home, and my lord offered to take care of me to my chair.

As his lordship was, I perceived, an acquaintance of my aunt's, I gave him my hand without any hesitation.

The chair soon stopped—He then came up to me again, and handed me into a post-chariot; in which I, simply believing he had only removed me to prevent my being oppressed with the crowd, sat very quiet, till he almost struck me dumb with astonishment, by declaring a violent passion for me—After having told me that he had taken this step to secure me to himself, as he knew that my uncle designed

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signed me for his son; and that he had not been able to think of any other way to prevent an union, the bare idea of which almost bereft him of life; he concluded with assuring me that I should be treated with the most respectful tenderness, and with hoping that I would not only pardon his presumption, but pity the situation of his heart, and facilitate the completion of his wishes.

I was, as I said before, astonished—My astonishment indeed was excessive; but I neither felt myself afraid nor offended: tho' I told him that I would never encourage any man without my uncle's approbation, and desired him to carry me back to Sir William's—I could not, however, prevail on him to comply with my request: yet he treated me in so gentle a manner, and was so obliging and so submissive, that I believed myself to be safe under his protection—When it grew light I grew less embarrassed; and had an opportunity to examine his features very
closely:

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closely : they are regularly beautiful—There is so much fire, and so much softness in his eyes, alternately, that I, sometimes, am hardly able to meet his looks ; and am forced to turn away mine twenty times in an hour—His hair is neither light nor dark, but prodigiously fine—His personal beauties are certainly considerable ; but the winning complacency of his carriage, the amiable traits of mildness and benevolence in his very expressive countenance, render him superior, infinitely superior to any man I ever yet beheld.

I shall write all night—I can't tell you half what I wish to say—He has been in such an agony since I talked of writing to my uncle, and is so afraid of my discovering the place of my retreat to you, and of being discovered by your answer, that I actually pity him ; and must, therefore, intreat you to direct your letter only to A. B. at the Smyrna coffee-house, in
Pall-

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Pall-Mall; from which it will be brought to me.

Tell my Alicia how affectionately I esteem her; you well know, my Olivia, how very dear you both are,

To your sincere friend,

EUDOCIA TAMEWORTH.

LETTER

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L E T T E R V.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

MY Eudocia, who engrosses my attention, and to whom I devote all my time, perpetually studious to make her situation agreeable to her, grows, every hour, more lovely.

I have told you that I made Loyd order some changes of dress for her—They were deposited in a large commode in her apartment.

As soon as she was going to rise, on the second morning, Loyd produced two night-gowns and two negligées, that she might chuse one out of them; and told me, afterwards, that she absolutely screamed at the sight of them, saying that they were all very handsome, and desired to be dressed in a pale pink night-gown, covered with bunches of white tissue flowers; the

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the cuffs, &c. were trimmed with blond-lace.

In this dress she came down to breakfast, with a small black-laced handkerchief crossed over her snowy bosom, and a blond-laced cap, which just covered the top of her charming hair—(She permitted my friseur to give her hair a fashionable appearance, but would not suffer him to defile it with powder.) She had a slight-worked muslin apron, and ruffles of the same; the former of which was spread over a white satin petticoat; so that altogether she was a most becoming, an enchanting figure.

With a delicious smile she accosted me, and thanked me for having provided such an elegant little wardrobe for her; telling me also that her uncle, when I would let him know where to find me, would settle with me for it—"I hope," added she, "that you will now consent to his being informed where I am."

"When

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“When you condescend to become mine,” replied I, “by the strongest ties, I will, that moment, send you to Sir William, or wait on him with you—”

“I have already told you, my lord,” said she, more than once, “that I cannot consent to any thing without my uncle’s previous approbation.”

“I must then be miserable,” replied I, folding my arms, and gazing on her, till tears of tenderness, excited by the dread of having her taken from me, rushed into my eyes; and I was obliged to cover my face with my handkerchief, to hide emotions which might, I feared, lessen me in her opinion.—Women, in general, do not like a tame, submissive, sighing, whining, poor devil of a lover; the careless, degagéé, indifferent, charming fellow of fire, is in their eyes a thousand times more attractive.—But my Eudocia is of a softer disposition.

While I sat stifling my emotions, she with her snowy fingers gently removed my hand

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hand from my eyes—Heavens—what a thrilling transport instantaneously shot thro' my trembling frame!—I was going to thank her, by catching her in my arms—but a look, serious tho' not severe, accompanied with these words: "Come, shall we go to breakfast?" restrained my ecstasies within proper bounds, and made us the best company in the world to each other.—This is doing nothing, however—Her uncle must, certainly, find her out; and then, unless I can prove her to be my wife, how shall I be able, justly, to detain her?—Were I to make the most submissive, the most advantageous proposal, I should as certainly receive a flat refusal.—What will become of me?—If appearances, indeed, are not very deceitful, she does not hate me; yet, whenever I mention marriage, she declares that she will not hear of it without her uncle's consent.

How many new charms do I, every day discover in her!

Having

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Having settled some accompts with Let-acre, I went in search of her. Approaching the musick-room, I heard the most ravishing harmony.

————— I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death—

Entering the room hastily, I saw my angel sitting at the organ—Her excellencies are innumerable — She is sensible, shrewd and lively, beyond expression; flies about like a bird, and never seems so happy as when I am chearful.

I carried her from the musick-room to the library: she discovered no small satisfaction at the sight of so many authors she had never met with before; telling me that her grandfather had few books of entertainment, but Milton's and Tasso's poems, of which she was very fond; and that he had taught her to relish the beautiful composition of the latter, in the lan-

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guage in which it was written.—What an accomplished creature!—And yet she has not the least vanity—either on account of her personal charms, or of her intellectual attainments—

I left her, thinking that she wished to be so left, among the books; but not being able to stay longer from her, soon returned.

I found her in so deep a reverie, that she did not even lift up her lovely eyes on my entrance. I stole softly behind her, and saw her intensely engaged in the perusal of Sir Charles Grandison.

A sigh which escaped me, arising from my reflecting on his well-pictured happiness in being so beloved, roused her.

I seized that moment to tell her I almost envied the author of the work before her, tho' dead, for having made it so betwitching—

“For Heavens sake,” cried she, “don't interrupt me; I am prodigiously interested in these people's affairs.”

I bowed,

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I bowed, obeyed, and took up a book also, placing myself in such a position, as to see every movement of the passions in her expressive features.

At last her bosom heaved, and she burst into tears—Then, lifting up her eyes, on a sudden, “My God!” said she, from what dangers have I hitherto been preserved!—“Let me—Let me go to my uncle’s,” added she, with hurrying accents—“I am terrified to death.”—

“My dear angel,” replied I, running to her, “what has alarmed you?—You shall go to your uncle when you please: let me only be authorized to go with you: let me but call you lady Avon, and I will wait on you directly.”

“Ay, that’s the very thing,” said she, with a plaintive voice, “You would force me to marry, you act like Sir Hargrave—But had I ever seen this story, my lord, I should not have come so quietly with you—I never dreamt of such proceedings.”

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“My dearest creature,” answered I, sitting down by her, and taking her hand in mine, “do not distrust me: I swear by every thing, solemn and sacred, that I will never even desire you to act, in any shape whatever, against your inclination—I only wish to prevail on you to think favourably of me—Were I but fortunate enough to please you, to make you repose confidence in me, you would not wish to leave me, to leave me for ever wretched.”—“But I see,” continued I, rising, and walking from her, looking the discontent, which I really felt, for she had twined herself about my soul, “I see that I must never hope to gain your affections—Some happier man is destined to obtain that most enviable felicity.”

Throwing myself into a chair, at a distance from her, I sat without speaking, near an hour, endeavouring to stifle my uneasiness; my frequent sighs, however, sufficiently discovered the extremity of my disquietude.

Eudocia

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Eudocia continued reading, and paid too much attention to her book, as I thought at least: but I happened to be very much mistaken—

Laying down her book, and walking slowly towards me, she said, with a smile, “ ’Tis a fine morning, my lord, what do you think of a saunter in the garden ?”

I rose immediately, to accompany her thither: but apprehending, while we were walking towards it, that she might possibly, in consequence of having imbibed some new ideas from the volume she had been reading, want to go into the garden, in order to find a way to make her escape from me; I was serious and pensive.

Having bounded over the grass for some time, with the most graceful celerity, blythe as a bird, and nimble as a fawn; she, all at once, flew from me, like lightning. I then, indeed, was cer-

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tain that she had intended to run into the fields, by which my friend's garden is bounded.

I pursued her.

She turned suddenly about, and met me.

Transported to find myself again mistaken, I caught her in my arms; but she, instantly breaking from me, told me, laughing, that she could outrun me at any time: challenging me, almost at the same breath, to a race.

You may be assured that I took up the gauntlet.

Just when I was coming up, near to my Atalanta, she, seeing me at her elbow, screamed, but with a playful sprightliness, and stumbled, by redoubling her pace, over something which she had not perceived—She stumbled, and she fell.

You cannot imagine how terrified I was, lest she should have been hurt by her fall—I raised her immediately from the ground—

She

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She attempted to move again, with her usual agility; but to no purpose—She complained of her foot, and would have fallen a second time, if I had not held her in my arms. I was distracted to think of her suffering a moment's uneasiness, and delivered myself, in terms which sufficiently proved the sincerity of my concern on her account.

“ My foot is better,” said she, “ and I will try to walk to the house.”

While she uttered these words, she seemed to be very much affected with my behaviour to her.

I intreated her to let me carry her to the house—She blushing refused, at first, but necessity compelled her to yield to my importunities: tho' it was with no small difficulty that I prevailed on her to throw her ivory arms round my neck, to support herself the more securely. The raptures, however, which I felt on being in so delicious a situation, almost endan-

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gered us both ; for I trembled to such a degree, that I could but just guide my steps with any kind of steadiness.

At last, I seated her on a sofa in the parlour, and retired, while Loyd examined her foot.

When I returned, she told me that she believed it was a little sprained.

I would have sent, immediately, for a surgeon, tho' I should by so doing have risked a discovery of the place in which I had secreted her ; but she strenuously opposed me, saying that Mrs. Loyd, no doubt, was acquainted with many common remedies proper upon such occasions, and that she would be in nobody's hands but hers.

How considerate ! how charming was her behaviour ! and how my heart longed to thank her for it !—I did thank her for it, the moment we were by ourselves, in terms which at once discovered my gratitude and my love.

With

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With the utmost good-humour she replied, "I am glad I have pleased you."

"Please me, my life," said I; "you have always pleased me—charmed me—transported me out of my senses"—

"Yes, but you was half angry, just before we went into the garden; and I only proposed going thither to divert you."

"Angry, my angel?" cried I, "no—you wrong me—I could not have been angry with you—I was only grieved at your wanting to leave me."

"I should not want to leave you," said she, "if my uncle did but consent to my being here; and I believe you yourself cannot think that you have taken a right step."

"You would then be mine," replied I, half afraid, half dreading her answer, "if your uncle consented?"

"I don't know what to say, my lord; I would act with discretion: and yet—

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“ Oh say what means that pause, that yet? Is it in my favour, or do you doom me to misery ?”

“ I can't talk about it now.”

She looked, tho' confused, kinder on me, I thought, than she had ever done.— I redoubled my attention to amuse her ; and was more than ever solicitous to make her situation easy, as she was obliged to be confined to her apartment. I read to her, I played on my mandoline—She never failed to make me a great many compliments, on my vocal and instrumental performances ; desiring me not only to teach her my songs, but my manner in singing them. What a delightful employment ! and how transported was I to hear her sweet voice, responsive to my less harmonious one ! She also learns to play upon the mandoline ; and I have the happiness of placing her delicate fingers upon the strings.—She must be mine—If I lose her now, I shall run distracted—But
I must

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I must lay down my pen—My whole time is devoted to my Eudocia—I have only leisure to write when I retire to my chamber—Eudocia is my life, my soul, my every thing—and I am as much with her as she will permit me to be.—

Richardson has alarmed her.—She has bolted her door every night, since I found her with a volume of his last masterly work in her hands.

D 6 LETTER

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LETTER VI.

From the same to the same.

MY Eudocia is still confined, but her foot grows better, and I have hopes—hopes my friend—She seems to be touched with my tenderness and concern for her, and by appearing so, increases my anxiety about her: yet she never was more chearful: she endeavours, with much assiduity to enliven me, but to little purpose.—I am, indeed, upon the rack—Every noise makes me start, and every person who rings at the gate, is suspected by me of coming to snatch her from my fond arms.

Your answers have been, hitherto, short, vague, and unsatisfactory—Tell me—but how should you, who have never seen her, who are unacquainted with her humour and her taste; how should you know bet-

ter

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better than myself—what will win her heart.—

We have been engaged in several long and interesting conversations. She has given me a very lively and picturesque description of the manner in which she was educated, of the style in which she lived, and of her companions also; who are, by her account, nearly as amiable as herself; two young girls, the daughters of a neighbouring country gentleman. She speaks of their friendship in the highest terms, wonders they do not write to her, and calls them her dear Alicia and her dear Olivia—How I envy them! especially the latter, who has, I find, the greater share of her esteem.

I told her yesterday, that I wished I was her beloved Olivia.

She, immediately, threw down her charming eyes, and said, “You would not get much by the gratification of that wish.”

A gentle

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A gentle sigh followed those words. What could I think of that sigh?—I felt myself uncommonly agitated, and instantly asked her what she meant by such enigmatical expressions, and why she sighed.

She made an evasive answer. I was not willing to tease her; and therefore, turned the conversation. There is certainly an alteration in her carriage: and yet she seems pleased to have me always near her. She talks to me with more freedom: she desires me to do twenty little things for her: she never stirs without my assistance. I carry her every evening to the door of her apartment: when I take my leave of her, she thanks me for my care, and wishes me a good night; with accents so full of tenderness, that they almost madden me with joy.—I have not yet, however, been able to bring her to the point so long, so earnestly—She calls me: I will fly to her on the wings of love.

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IN CONTINUATION.

I AM, at last, as happy as I can, with reason, expect to be, in so short a time—
But what has reason to do with love?

Yesterday, while I was sitting by her, and looking on her with unutterable delight, but not listening to the observations, which she threw out on a variety of subjects—(Observations which I should have listened to with rapture, had my mind been perfectly at ease) with the attention they deserved; she said, “What ails you, my lord? You are still melancholy, tho’ I do my best to divert you.”

“I cannot be chearful,” replied I, while I remain in this suspense. “If you loved as ardently as I do, without being encouraged to expect a return to your love, would you not be in an unquiet, would you not be in an unhappy state, as I am?”

“I really

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“ I really think, my lord, that, of the two, I have most reason to be unquiet and unhappy, taken from my friends and confined here, without having the liberty of seeing them, or writing to them; and yet I have hitherto, submitted to my imprisonment, without discovering so much uneasiness as I, possibly, ought to have done upon such an occasion.”

As she spoke these words with an angry tone, yet looked, at the same time, as if she was sorry for having so uttered them—I felt myself strangely moved—I felt most severely the justness of her reproof;—it pained my heart extremely. I could not bear to see her repine at a situation, which I had hoped, from her behaviour in it, was not totally disagreeable to her. From some expressions, however, in her speech, I flattered myself with hopes, but was afraid to indulge them.

I only sighed a reply.

“ Since then we are not satisfied with each other,” said she, “ it would be certainly

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certainly better for us to separate — Suffer me, therefore, to go home to my uncle, directly.”

“ You are absolutely resolved, then, to make me supremely wretched ? Sir William, you know, designs to have you married to his son : you know too that when I have resigned you to him, I must never expect to see you again ; for you may be assured, from my increasing passion for you, that death will be more welcome to me, than the sight of you in another’s arms ; and that I shall not be able to survive the loss of you.—But you shall be mistress of your own actions, madam : I will not detain you so exceedingly against your inclination : if, after all my respectful tenderness : if, after all my assiduities to soften your heart in my favour, you give me no reason to hope for your esteem, I give you up—I still doat on you, still adore you—but I give you up—You shall be happy, if I can, possibly, make you so ; whatever wretchedness I feel

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feel by endeavouring to promote your felicity."

I stopped here—my voice faltered so much, that my words were hardly articulated.

She sat with her eyes fixed on the carpet, seemingly in a great agitation.

At that juncture your letter was brought to me, which informed me of your imagining that Sir William had discovered the place to which I carried his niece, and would soon find means to get her back again. How much am I indebted to you for this intelligence, tho' it made me almost mad at the same time !

Eudocia soon perceived the extreme perturbation of my mind, upon the receipt of so interesting a letter ; but I did not give her time to ask the cause of it.

" There, madam," said I, now you will have your wish : " your uncle is coming to tear you from me ; and you will for ever get rid of a man, who is become so odious to you."

She

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She lifted up her sweet astonished eyes, and looked, I thought, distressed.

I flew to her, I could not bear to see her a single moment unhappy ; and taking her no longer reluctant hand, said, " Tell me, my lovely, my beloved Eudocia, what gives you uneasiness now, as I am going to resign you to your uncle, and to the happy man who will, I hope, be able to please you ; tho' it has not been in my power to give you pleasure. — However, Miss Tameworth," continued I, " as I have not abused the advantages which your situation here afforded me, I shall not, I flatter myself, be remembered with detestation—Since you cannot behold me with the eyes of love, let me at least be thought intitled to your compassion."

With a sigh, which shook her whole frame, she dropped a tear upon the charming hand, which I still held, and said, " Who told you that you was not loved, and that I wished to forget you ?"

A shower

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A shower of tears prevented farther utterance. I threw my arms round her: her head sunk upon my shoulder, while I, transported almost out of my senses, kissed away the pearly drops, rolling down her glowing cheek; and softly asked her if I might draw animating hopes from her tears and from her emotions: if she would indeed be mine.

“Hold,” replied she, rising, with uncommon spirit, “As you have not hitherto given me reason to complain of your behaviour, don’t begin to make it censurable—It is in consideration of the discretion which has distinguished your carriage to me, that I am resolved to be yours.”

“My angel, my life, my all,” replied I, “we must then remove from hence with all possible expedition.”—

“And why not stay and see my uncle, and persuade him to consent?”—

“Oh! no—he never will give his consent—It cannot be expected—We must set
out,

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out, immediately, for France. On our arrival there, I will, because I would omit nothing that can be done to please you, write to him, and ask his permission to call him uncle: but till we are out of his power, I dare not venture to have an interview with him."

She made no reply.

As she had constantly and strenuously opposed all my solicitations for a marriage, I was quite unprepared for the sudden performance of the ceremony, in a proper manner: I, therefore, ordered my travelling equipage to be got ready, and we in a short time afterwards set out post for Dover.

She bore her journey beyond my expectation—She is rather serious, and often seems to be deeply thinking; but she has, hitherto, made no opposition to any thing, except an increase of tenderness on my part; tho' I swear I love her, and revere her too much to take any unbecoming liberties.

My

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My dear, my amiable Eudocia, desired so earnestly to have Loyd with her, that I consented to her going in the chariot with us.

Let me know all that passes relating to our flight, and direct for me at the post-house at Calais.

We are waiting for a wind—

I don't find yet that we are pursued; but wish heartily to be on the other side of the water.

The wind is fair—

Adieu.

LETTER

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LETTER VII.

Miss TAMEWORTH to Miss OLIVIA HEBER:

WHERE are you, my dear friend? and why do I hear nothing from you? These questions, indeed, you may, perhaps, be ready to retort upon me.—But I actually wrote to you, my dearest girl, and told you all that had happened to me—I am very much afraid that my letter miscarried—If you have received it, you are, probably, displeased with my behaviour; you think that I have been too condescending to lord Avon, and are considering in what terms to chide me.—But hold, Olly: stay a little—see him; hear him, before you condemn your friend—I am young and unexperienced, I well know; and something tells me that I have been wrong in not opposing more violently my lord's proceedings.—Yet I
am

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am sure he loves me ; and while he treats me with so much respect, while he is perpetually striving to oblige me, can I drive him to despair, by consenting to marry my cousin ?

“ Why then, if you love my lord, do you not accept of his hand directly ? ”

I'll tell you, my dear Olivia—I am well assured that my uncle, on my acting in that manner, would endeavour to take measures to deprive me of my fortune ; and I cannot bear to think of my lord's losing what he would have a right to, or of being involved in disputes and law-suits on my account. No—I will let him see that I am not less generous than himself.

We are on our way to Paris, from whence he has promised to write to my uncle ; and if my uncle should persist in refusing his consent, I will never marry at all : not, at least, while lord Avon is unhappy about me.—I am not sure whether I love him as well as he does me, but

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am very sure that I shall never like any other man so well.

Write to me, my dear Olivia—If you are not able to write—how I am terrified lest you should be indisposed!—Why is my Alicia silent? Lord Avon's servant called every day at the coffee-house, but found no letter agreeable to the address which I sent to you—I now send another before we leave England, and beg, if you ever loved your Eudocia, to dispatch an answer to her immediately.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. MOUNTNEY to Lord AVON.

YOUR route is discovered—Sir William and his son are both in pursuit of you: lose no time, therefore; if you are determined to commit matrimony, do it at once boldly, and with a good grace, and then nobody can take your Eudocia from you: tho', between you and I, my lord, were I even as desperately in love as you are—Thank heaven it is not in my nature to be so—I should, I believe, be not quite so eager, to tie myself for life to a girl, who was so very ready to go off with me—I would not willingly persuade you to be a rogue—but, I am sorry to say it—I am afraid I should not have had altogether so much *sangfroid* in such circumstances; I mean, if the lady had been as warm as I am; and I am naturally

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turally led to imagine that she would not have been cruel, if you had availed yourself ever so little of her situation: yet trust me, I honour you for having acted so nobly; and hope that she will requite you for the generosity of your behaviour, by making the best wife in the world, according to my notions about such a character—Fidelity, quietness, cleanliness, and docility, are the virtues which I require in a woman, you know; I demand no others: perhaps I demand too many; more, I fancy, than I shall ever find in a female.

Sedley is just come home; so you missed each other. How he exclaims against your cursed decorums, as he calls them, for letting slip so glorious an opportunity! you deserve, he says, all the mischiefs which can be hatched in the heart of a woman. But he is—a very naughty man, to make use of lady dowager Loveit's favourite word—in my language, one of your sad dogs, with a woman—with his own sex

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he is a man of a thousand.—As for myself, I am between both—neither so solemn as your lordship, nor so wild as Charles—Now, if you think I have not too low an opinion of myself, let me know how you and your Eudocia go on—Pardon me for having been so short in my replies before—I was really prevented from sending you above four lines at a time, by urgent business, which could not be neglected, or indeed, delayed.

If you are noosed when this reaches your hand, pray make my compliments of congratulation acceptable to your angel.

LETTER

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L E T T E R IX.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

HOW terrified have I been, on my poor Eudocia's account ! Soon after our embarkation such a storm arose, that it made even those who navigated our little vessel, apprehensive of danger ; but their apprehensions were trifling, compared to mine, concerning my dear, dear girl ; who, never having been at sea before, was extremely alarmed—Yet I really believe that I was still more alarmed—I had taken her from her family, with whom she lived in security, and expected every moment to see her buried in the ocean—What dreadful reflections sprung up in my tortured mind !—I was almost unnerved by them—I caught her in my arms, and endeavoured to comfort her, tho' I stood much more in need of consolation myself, while she laid

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her languid head on my bosom ; as if she thought herself safer so reclined, bade me have patience, and called on me to join with her in supplicating heaven to snatch us from the jaws of death.—Our petitions were heard—The scene grew less horrid ; the waves were less agitated, and I was supremely happy in beholding my soul's richest treasure on shore, perfectly recovered from her fright, and in high spirits. She was not once sick during the passage, which was not indeed a long, tho' a very tempestuous one.

We shall not, I fancy, return in haste, unless there should be a necessity for appearing in England—This letter is accompanied with a formal, but respectful address to Sir William Tameworth, to demand his lovely niece in marriage—It is filled with apologies, for the offences which I have committed, in consequence of the ardor of my passion ; and my Eudocia has done me the honour to approve of what I have said—

I shall

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I shall expect, with the greatest impatience, the baronet's reply, which will be forwarded to me, according to my orders, at Paris—To that metropolis I shall set out in an hour's time, not without hopes of receiving a letter from you in a short time, directed to me in it.

E A LETTER

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LETTER X.

MISS TAMEWORTH TO MISS OLIVIA HEBER.

TH O' I am still in the greatest surprise about you, my dear, I now impute my not hearing from you, to the irregularity of my own movements: I, therefore, shall still continue to inform you of them; not doubting but that your surprise, on reading about them, will be equal to mine—For my part, I am astonished beyond expression at what has passed, and also beyond expression, concerned.

Poor lord Avon, my dear Olivia, the most agreeable, the most amiable of men, lies dead, at this moment, I am afraid, and I am the unhappy cause of his death.

Do you not wonder at my calmness, after so dreadful an event?—I actually wonder at it myself: but I believe that my anger and resentment have got the
better

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better of my grief. When I consider how insolently I have been treated, by those who were not in the least authorized to take such liberties, I feel myself too much provoked to be moved by the softer passions.—But to give you a detail of this shocking affair, with as much exactness as I can—

I wrote to you while we were waiting for a wind at Dover. Soon afterwards the wind proved favourable, and we embarked: but in a little time after our embarkation, a violent storm arose, which alarmed me exceedingly, as I had never been at sea before; my terrors, however, great as they were, fell far short of lord Avon's apprehensions concerning me—He seemed to be attentive to nothing, to be solicitous about nothing but my health and safety: and his apprehensions operated so powerfully upon him, that he would scarce suffer me to go from his arms—I felt myself, indeed, I will freely own, my dear

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Olivia, happier and more secure in them, than any where else.

We arrived safe at Calais, however; but my lord would not proceed from thence till I was quite recovered from my fatigue—His last tender precaution occasioned, I fear, the unfortunate event which I now so sincerely deplore—

He wrote, immediately on our landing at Calais, a letter to my uncle, to ask his consent to our marriage. Unluckily my uncle and Mr. Tameworth left England in pursuit of us, before that letter came to hand.

Lord Avon having, in consequence of thinking himself more sure of me than ever, left me for a few moments with Mrs. Loyd; I, like a giddy simpleton, leaned out of the window for a little amusement, to stare at the variety of new figures which were passing in the street before me—

On a sudden I heard a voice well known to me—"There she is, now we are sure of her."

Turning

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Turning my head instantly, I saw my uncle.—Imagine my surprize and terror; for, by what he said, I naturally supposed that he was come to fetch me away: and I was right—He was in my room in a moment—Instead of discovering any displeasure at the sight of me, he said he was very happy in meeting with me; and added, that he had brought his son with him, to conduct me to England.

I started and drew back, shocked at the thoughts of leaving my lord, desiring him to stay and speak to lord Avon, as he had just written to him.

“We cannot possibly stay,” replied he, looking at his son, “My lord may follow us.”

He then pulled me, very loth to attend him, towards the door. I hung back, and refused to go with him till I had seen my lord.

My uncle, finding me so refractory, painted in the strongest colours the inde-
licacy of remaining with a man so long as

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I had done ; declared that my character was absolutely lost ; and that I could have no chance to appear in the world again in a reputable light, but by putting myself under his protection—" I am your nearest relation, concluded he, and never could have thought that you would have shewn so much unwillingness to accompany me."

I assured him that I was not unwilling to accompany him, for whom I had a great regard, provided he would not oblige me to marry against my inclination—" Lord Avon, said I, from the moment he carried me from the Opera-House, has treated me with the highest respect : he would have married me immediately, but I refused to be united to him till I received your consent.—My lord wrote a letter to you, on my repeated refusal to him, in order to obtain that consent, which is now, perhaps, on its passage to England ; and as no reasonable objections can, I believe, be made to his lordship's proposals,

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posals, I wish you would stay and hear them from his own mouth."

"I shall stay for nobody," said my uncle, fiercely—"You must, therefore, resolve to go with me directly."

What could I do? My uncle was positive, was peremptory: I could not expose myself by resisting my nearest remaining relation—Resistance would have been to no purpose, for there was not a creature to lend me the least assistance but Loyd—I desired her, earnestly however, to tell my lord, that I went with my uncle, and that I should not forget my promise to him.

Loyd looked both frightened and afflicted; and my uncle conducted me on board a vessel, which was just ready to sail.

I spoke not a single word. I was totally passive, but I determined to keep both my hand and my heart for lord Avon.

While I was so determining, my uncle was talking to the master of the vessel—

Presently

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Presently Mr. Tameworth came on board, in a violent agitation, and told his father, in a low voice, that in following us, he had been pursued by lord Avon—"He demanded Miss Tameworth of me, sword in hand;" and upon my replying, "you shall never see her again," said, "it is enough, Sir, then I shall endeavour to prevent you from enjoying the happiness you have so peremptorily refused me," calling upon me to defend myself. I obeyed him, immediately, and ran him thro' the body; he fell, and I have been lucky enough to escape, and will accompany you to England; from whence I shall set sail, as soon as possible, for Rotterdam, if my lord should actually be killed."

I fainted away, and was only recovered to feel my unhappiness the more severely.

When I opened my eyes, I found my uncle solicitous, Mr. Tameworth particularly so, about my recovery—But how different were their attentions from those I had so lately received from my lord!—

I pushed

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I pushed them from me, as objects which filled me with horror ; and now wished for that tempest which I beheld, in such an alarmed state, to bury me in the waves.

Tears and sighs were all the replies I could make to Mr. Tameworth's assiduities—I even put my hand before my eyes, that I might not look on him who had deprived the most amiable man in the world of his life.

My uncle attempted to comfort me—
“ Had you but waited,” said I, “ a moment, according to my request, to see my lord, this dreadful affair would not have happened.”

In this way we continued, till we arrived in Hill-Street.

My lady received me with a torrent of sharp exclamations, against my weakness and indiscretion.

I only answered them with my tears.—
I desired to go to my apartment, and to see nobody, since I had for ever lost the
amiable

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amiable man who was so deservedly dear to me.

My uncle shook his head at me—My aunt called me a ridiculous girl, adding, with passionate accents, that I should be the death of her poor dear George also.

George very officiously offered to follow me; and intreated me, with much importunity, not to be displeased at the warmth of my lady's temper—I flapped the door against him; and throwing myself into a chair, gave a vent to my sorrow: to a sorrow more piercing than I had ever yet endured; and as it admits of no relief, it will, I hope, soon put an end to my miserable existence.

I wish, my dear Olivia, that they would send me back to the sweet retreat, in which I spent so many happy days with my beloved companions; or that they would suffer me to invite you and my Alicia to be with me here — But I have no power to do any thing: I have

no

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no will in this house. Yet, not all the force on earth shall ever oblige me to marry George Tameworth.

Write to me now, my truly loved friend, if you have not written already; for you will, I believe, own that I stand in need of all your consolation.

LETTER

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L E T T E R XI.

From the same to the same.

I HEAR from you, at last, my dear Olivia ; I hear from you and my sweet Alicia, both at the same time—What pleasure has not your kind remembrance afforded me !

I also learn from Mr. Mountney, who has brought me a letter from lord Avon, that he is, unexpectedly, recovered, and hopes to be with me as soon as the surgeons will give him leave to travel—Were I to describe the joy I feel upon this occasion, you would suppose that my head was a little turned ; and were I to copy my lord's letter, you would think that he was still less in his senses. It was accompanied with one to my uncle, in which he has offered (as Mr. Mountney tells me) to give up half my fortune, provided he may
have

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have leave to address me; and his friend adds, that my uncle, after having demurred, said he would answer my lord's letter, and desire the favour of his company when he came to England.

This Mr. Mountney is a pretty gentleman, appears to be a sincere friend of my lord's, and would adore my sweet Olivia, were she but here—He seems to have all his sober senses about him, and is neither one minute elevated above the clouds, nor the next, sunk into the abyss of despair: but he is not a lover like lord Avon or Mr. Tameworth. As the former is now recovered, I can bear to name them together; tho' the latter is so very inferior a character, that there can be no comparison between them.

I am in prodigious spirits: this agreeable news, added to your friendly letter, has made me wild with joy.

I am to go to the play to-morrow—I have not stirred out of my apartment since I came here, till to-day—I have seen nothing

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thing yet.—I expect a vast deal of pleasure, by seeing every thing, and going every where.

I have not thoroughly enjoyed myself since that charming masquerade night. I wish I could give you a tolerable idea of it; but I will hope that I may have an opportunity to shew you both, my dear friends, every thing that's worth seeing in town.

You railly me about Edmund, but—whether your conjectures are right or not—he is nobody—to me.—He comes too late.

LETTER

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LETTER XII.

Mr. MOUNTNEY to Lord AVON.

I CARRIED your letters, agreeably to your desires; and if it is discreet to fall in love with a woman, meerly for her person, love on.—I never yet saw a woman so captivating as your Eudocia. Don't fly out now, and imagine me capable of insinuating that her charms are meerly personal—She has many attractions besides those which strike at first sight—She has several accomplishments to engage the attention; she has a good understanding, much pleasing vivacity, and some sensibility.

She received your letter, with more gaiety than I expected, from a woman in love.—But women are unaccountable beings—She knew, indeed, by George's staying in England, as well as from publick

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lick report, that you were out of danger, before.

I mentioned your disinterested affection for her.

She replied, while a most bewitching smile lighted up her face, that she feared you over-rated her.

If she loves you as well as you love her, my lord, you will be certainly as happy as the tenderest passion can make you: I mean, if Sir William accepts your offer; and I fancy he will swallow the bait.—But then, if George should be as strongly enamoured as yourself, and will not give her up, what must be done? No more duelling, I hope—There is no woman, begging Miss Tameworth's pardon, worth fighting for—Hold—Have I not already said enough to expect your lordship's sword thro' my body.—You may spare me, however—There will be tilting enough if you quarrel with every man who admires Eudocia.

Sedley

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Sedley has been obliged to take a trip to Ireland—Had he been here he would have, I believe, got a sight of her by this time—He is the devil of a fellow, you know, with the women—A word to the wife—Come, therefore, with all possible haste, and make her firmly yours—

I am preparing to set off for Chester, to wait the arrival of my uncle—Ackworth goes as Sedley comes: perhaps they may meet.

LETTER

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LETTER XIII.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

I Have been introduced to my lovely Eudocia, in form.—With what tender awe did I approach my angel! and with what sweet vivacity did she welcome me to England, in the presence of Lady Tameworth and Sir William, who have, at length, on my repeated solicitations, agreed to my proposal!

How elegantly was the charming girl adorned to receive me! She looked a Venus.—Never had she appeared so beautiful to me. Pleasure danced in her lovely eyes, on my being presented to her by her uncle; and the consciousness of not being able to conceal her joyous emotions, threw a blush over her fair face, which made her perfectly enchanting.—I was lost in transport, and,
for

THE MASQUERADE. 97

for some time, could scarce keep it within proper bounds.

Sir William and my lady either guessing at my wishes, or thinking it polite to leave us, made decent apologies, and quitted the room, one after the other.

With what rapture did I then begin to unfold every secret of my heart! How did I lament the pains of absence, and the tortures of uncertainty!—How did I exult * having, at last, gained the happy moment, to solicit the favour of her hand, with the concurrence of those who had the care of her; and at being encouraged to hope that she would not now refuse to bless me with it!

“ I don’t know,” said she, with a lively air, “ whether I ought not to discourage you for a treatment, which is, I find, from having conversed with people of the world, entirely unprecedented; and which, if not punished, should, certainly, never be rewarded.”

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“ When

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“ When you reflect upon the dreadful alternative to which I was reduced,” said I, taking her hand and kissing it, “ either to carry you away or to lose you for ever; you will not, I am well assured, you cannot blame proceedings, which, admitting them to be extravagant, were the strongest proofs of a violent and irresistible passion, bearing down all before it with its impetuosity; and when you consider, that notwithstanding the uncommon ardor of my passion, and the flattering opportunities in my power, I never offered to indulge it, nor behaved in a manner the least presuming or disrespectful; you will, I hope, madam, be more inclined to allow me all reasonable freedoms.”

“ You are in too great a hurry, my lord,” said she, withdrawing her hand, with a look at once expressive of dignity and complacency, “ you have gained my uncle’s approbation, and have received no refusal from me; but you ought to leave every thing else to time and my discretion.

I have

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I have acquired a good deal of knowledge since you took me from my uncle—I had, at that time, been only two days arrived from a distant part of England; where, from my infancy, I had chiefly conversed with my father and grandfather, who both lived retired; and a country gentleman, a neighbour, who mixed as little with society as themselves.—These relations, this neighbour, and two young girls, as innocent and ignorant as myself, were my principal companions. I had no mother to inform me how a young woman ought to conduct herself, when she came to be taken notice of by men; I had no books to acquaint me with the manners of genteel life; and being thrown immediately, upon my arrival in town, into a situation so new and so embarrassing, it is not to be wondered at that I behaved both awkwardly and indiscreetly in it.”

This very sensible and rational speech, was delivered with a most bewitching voice—I could have listened to her me-

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ludious accents for ever, with an unwearied attention, had not the business of the moment urged me to interrupt her, by asking if she thought so charming an apology, for a behaviour which was perfectly prudent, and in every respect enchanting, necessary. "Would you, my Eudocia," continued I, "wish to lose that amiable, that delightful simplicity of manners, which add so much loveliness to your carriage, and which render you so superior to other women, who affect to charm by art, and are afraid to trust to the attractions of nature. No, my angel, that noble frankness, that innate modesty, and that winning condescension, with which you honoured me while you was under my protection, render you compleatly attractive: you want no other charms, you want only a little more consideration for a man who truly loves, who tenderly adores you."

She smiled, and her smile was an approving one; but she made a strong and
serious

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serious resistance when I attempted to kiss her blushing cheek.

To confess the truth, Mountney, I was disconcerted at this repulse, as she had lived with me, as she had permitted all decent liberties before she had agreed to be my wife ; as I had done every thing to obtain her heart, and had all the reason in the world to believe that her heart throbbed in my favour.—I was hurt, but I could not be angry—I was half tempted to shew some resentment, but her looks disarmed me—I could not chide so sweet an offender ; I therefore strove to conceal my disquietude.

Finding that I desisted from making any efforts to displease her, she very readily suffered me to speak of our approaching marriage with the raptures which it naturally excited. I even ventured to intreat her not to make any unnecessary delays.

She made no reply to my last words, but began to talk of her Derbyshire

F 3

friends ;

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friends; and to tell me how delighted she would be at the sight of one or both of them, while I sat earnestly wishing her to complete my happiness.

I assured her, with the utmost sincerity, that every thing which could afford her the least satisfaction, would give me the highest pleasure; and asked her why she did not invite the Miss Hebers to come to town, as they would be then ready to accompany us to Richmond after our marriage; adding, that I imagined she would rather chuse to go to my house there, than to remove farther from the capital so early in the season.

She seemed pleased with this proposal, and told me that she would ask lady Tameworth's leave to invite Olivia, at least.—“ I will then write to her directly.”

I tore myself away from her soon afterwards, with no small reluctance; but was transported, at the same time, to think that I had started a scheme which might make her the more willing to fix upon an early

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early day—My lady, who, if I am not mistaken, has no desire to see handsome girls about her, may, possibly, avail herself of her compliance with her niece's request, to quicken the departure both of her and her friend, from her house to mine; and by doing so, will make me blest with my Eudocia sooner than I could otherwise hope to be. I wish, however, that my dear angel would discover a little more tenderness for me.—After all that has passed, have I not reason to expect it?—have I not had reason to be disappointed?

Tameworth is gone into the North, in order to be out of the way, I suppose—The man who loves Eudocia, and can bear to see her in the arms of another, must be a wretch indeed.

LETTER XIV.

Miss TAMEWORTH to Miss HEBER.

THIS flies to you, my dear Alicia—to you both, my dear friends, from your Eudocia, from her lord Avon; we wish, with equal earnestness and sincerity, to see you in town. Lady Tameworth, by me, invites you; and my lord is quite interested in your arrival, as I have protested that I cannot think of being married but in your presence. — Consider, therefore, my sweet girls, what so violent a lover as he declares himself to be, must endure from your delay! and let that consideration hasten your departure—I actually blush while I write—do I not discover a prodigious partiality for lord Avon?—And yet he is perpetually complaining of my want of tenderness—He would, indeed, have me be just as extravagant

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vagant as himself: he would not have me think of any body, speak to any body, or breathe for any body, but him.—Now I declare it is downright slavery to love at this rate.—My lord is certainly, in my prejudiced eyes, the most charming man in the world; but tho' I love him, and him alone, I can laugh, chat, and trifle with every other agreeable fellow who comes in my way.—

He's here—What would he say were he to see this?—I must seal it directly.—My best respects to your good father—He will, I hope, cheerfully consent to send one or both of you, immediately, to

YOUR

EUDOGIA.

P. S. Let me know when you set out—My lord and I will come and meet you.

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LETTER

LETTER XV.

MISS OLIVIA HEBER to Miss HEBER.

I HAVE been so continually hurried from place to place, by our dear Eudocia, that I have not had a moment's leisure (since I dispatched my little note to acquaint my father with my safe arrival) to write to you.

You expect, I know, a particular account of every thing I see and hear, in a place so new to me; but my lively friend, had she time to comply with your wishes, would gratify your curiosity in a far more satisfactory manner than I can pretend to. I say, had she time—The truth is, lord Avon can hardly bear to be out of her sight: and when she is not particularly engaged with him, she is surrounded with company; so that she can scarce call a moment her own. My lord himself complains

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plains exceedingly, and wishes with the greatest impatience for Tuesday.

After the ceremony, and dining at Sir William's, we are to set out for Richmond (lord Avon has a house there) and Mr. Mountney and myself are to be left with our new-married friends: Mr. Mountney is one of my lord's intimates.

I was never, you know, like our Eudocia, eager in pursuit of novelty: my books, my birds, my needle and my flowers, always afforded me amusement enough to hinder me from being in the least vapourish—and though you are more of my way of thinking than hers, you would bear the bustle of the world, and the dissipation of a fashionable life better than I do, could you have been prevailed upon to leave our dear father. It was my affection for our young friend, and my inability to resist her pressing solicitations, which alone brought me hither: she is, however, though with the same affectionate regard for me, so much more employed, than when she was

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at the Wood, that I really do not think myself necessary to her happiness.

My lord, though obliging beyond my expectation, appears to me, sometimes to grudge me the esteem which she discovers for me. He would not, if he knew both our hearts : he deserves all the tenderness she can bestow upon him, and she confesses to me how dearly she loves him ; but she, undoubtedly is fond of company and public diversions, while my lord seems to doat on nothing but her : he is attentive to the slightest motion of her eyes : he flies to obey her, to please her, to gratify every wish of her heart. He has presented to her the richest and most elegant set of jewels, in the opinion of lady Tameworth, and of other people of taste, imaginable :— but were I in Dossy's place, I should look upon my lord as the most valuable jewel in my possession. He has, with a fine countenance expressive of every amiable virtue of the heart, a noble air, a melodious voice, and all the graces which a man can derive from

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from rank and education.—They are just now running into my dressing-room, and insist upon my going with them to my lord's house in Grosvenor-square, that Eudocia may give some directions about the new-furnishing the apartment designed for her.—I must, therefore, leave off writing—I have begged hard to be excused. My lord would have persuaded Dossy to let me stay, but she will not hear of it.

IN CONTINUATION.

Richmond.

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YOU will now, certainly, expect an account of the wedding-day;—but it was a day of such splendor, gaiety, and confusion, that I cannot, I am afraid, give you an adequate description of it. Every body was fine. Our dear Eudocia was in a white and silver negligée, with her hair dressed in the most elegant taste, and ornamented only with a large brilliant feather stuck on one side: but no ornaments can, in
my

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my opinion, increase either her beauty, or my lord's. She looked like an angel, and behaved with a modest easy dignity, which sufficiently discovered how well she knew how to acquit herself in her new situation.

My lord, who was in a light suit of cloaths embroidered with silver, which infinitely became him, seemed to devour her with his eyes,—eyes of love, while her's, though generally cast down, overpowered by the stare of admiration round her, were now and then raised up to him with a smile of sweetness, which, momentary as it was, made him extremely well satisfied with it.

When the most superb entertainment I had ever beheld was over, we amused ourselves according to our inclinations.—The company invited were, Sir William and lady Tameworth, Mrs. Minchin, a relation of her ladyship's, Major Wallworth, a friend of Sir William's, general Brett, an uncle of lord Avon's, Sir Thomas and lady Pettly, related also to his lordship, Mr. Mountney and myself.

There

THE MASQUERADE. III

There was a quadrille table, to which lady Tameworth with lady Pettly, general Brett, and the major, sat down: but on lord Avon's presenting the mandoline to lady Avon, and begging the favour of a song, they laid down their cards, and were well paid for their attention—Lord and lady Avon charmed the whole room for a considerable time, alternately: the mandoline is a pretty lulling instrument, not very much unlike a lute, of which you have heard a description from Sir George Tameworth; and a plaintive air is rendered more plaintive by being accompanied with it. The airs which my lord has taught his Eudocia, are the most pathetic ones to be conceived, and she does them all possible justice.

I expressed myself in such a manner about this instrument, that Mr. Mountney offered very politely to teach me to finger it; but I am much afraid I shall be both a dull and awkward scholar: for as warm an admirer as I am of music, I am quite ignorant

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rant of the theory of it, and no less a stranger to the practical part. Mr. Mountney is a fine performer upon the violin and harpsichord.

In the evening, we four went to Richmond in my lord's elegant new coach, just time enough to arrive there before supper.

My lady was received, on her entrance into the hall, by all the attendants, whom my lord presented to her; and then led her into a magnificent saloon, brilliant as mid-day, with lustres. Soon afterwards we sat down to supper in a parlour adjoining, in which every thing the most rare and elegant in the season was served up.

About twelve o'clock, at my lord's request, I attended my dear friend to her dressing-room, where her woman, Mrs. Loyd, to whom she has taken a great fancy, and who is very attentive to please, waited to undress her.—Mrs. Loyd then conducted me to my apartment.

Next

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Next day, after breakfast, we all took an airing, and viewed the environs, which are very pleasant.—We have been to see the gardens here, and are to spend a day at Windsor, in a short time. We chat and laugh; and all, except me, play and sing.—Mr. Mountney, however, has, at length, prevailed on me to try my voice; and flatteringly tells me, that nothing but my excessive diffidence prevents me from excelling lady Avon.—My lord and lady appear, both, to have a design upon us, I think; they are always crying up Mountney to me; and letting me know what a good creature he is, and how few men so agreeable are so deserving.—Perhaps he may be the uncommon man they describe him, but I am not touched with his extraordinary merit.—I prefer the tranquility which I enjoy at this place, to the hurry and bustle of London; but I should be very well pleased to return to you, as I have now seen our dear friend happily married. She will

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will not hear of my return : she is all life and spirit, and really almost overpowers me with her vivacity. When you write, pray let me know how Edmund bears the news of her marriage.

LETTER

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LETTER XVI.

SIR CHARLES SEDLEY TO COL. ACKWORTH.

AT last I have got sight of this charming, this almost divine creature, lord Avon's angel; every man's angel!

I intended to hurry down to Richmond, soon after my arrival in London, but meeting Mountney by accident, he informed me that he had left them yesterday in Grosvenor-square, and offered to accompany me thither, if I was going.

I made no objection: we went, therefore, together.

I had raised my expectations very high, with regard to this glorious girl, from the encomiums, the extravagant encomiums, which I had heard on her personal charms; but she exceeded them. She is quite a Hebe, a most enchanting creature! what eyes, hair, teeth, complexion! and then, such

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such a bewitching sprightliness! such a transporting grace in every thing she does! What quickness of apprehension;—what vivacity, yet what delicacy of sentiment!—Avon was a lucky fellow in seeing her before me; had I met with her, not the wealth of worlds should have gained her from me.—I never yet beheld a woman so totally to my taste.—I would even have committed matrimony, as little relish as I have for a state of slavery, to have secured her.—She has made me appear ridiculous, I believe, already, as things are situated: for I could not take my eyes off her; let me die if I could.—Mountney stared at me as I stared at her; and Avon, had he not been engaged in the same delightful employment, looking at her, and listening to her, would have, no doubt, observed me, and not with the most unruffled aspect, as I have a strong notion that he is inclined to be jealous.

When dinner was over, and when the coffee things were removed, proud of the delightful treasure he is possessed of, and desirous

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desirous of exhibiting all her perfections, he asked her in a tone and manner, as if he had been rather a lover than a husband, if she would favour his friend, meaning me, with a song?

She made a condescending bow, smiling most alluringly at the same time, and, calling for her mandoline, sung such an air that it threw my soul into extasies never felt till that delicious moment. I was quite dissolved in rapture! — her fine eyes full of the most bewitching languor looked every syllable articulated by her melodious voice, while the whitest and most elegant fingers in the universe, brought out such soft lulling sounds, and while the gracefulest hand and arm were shewn to such advantage. — Oh! Ackworth — there was no enduring it. — You might as well have stopt the sun in his course, as have made me keep my transports within bounds.

When she was going to lay down her instrument I rose, took it gently from her with one hand, while I softly pressed her
delicate

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delicate fingers to my glowing lips with the other.

She blushed — I was wrong: yet her blush gave such an additional richness to her complexion, that I could not repent of what I had done.

Lord Avon, however, looked displeased. Mountney knitted his brows at me.

Seeing myself eyed in so particular a manner, I began to think an apology necessary. On a sudden, therefore, recovering my vivacity, I told lady Avon that my having been just come from Paris, where every lady permitted the free use of her hand, would, I hoped, procure my pardon, especially when she considered that she had the finest one in the world.

A second beautiful blush overspread her charming face, accompanied with a smile.

Happening to turn my eyes towards Lord Avon, I saw him, with a pale countenance, biting his lips, and discovering the strongest marks of jealousy.

Soon

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Soon afterwards I brushed off—but does he or Mountney, or any man think that I will not admire a fine girl when she comes in my way? Besides, this is a young creature uncommonly beautiful; she has charms enough to set the whole world madding after her.

I spoke of her that night, at the Star and Garter, where I met a party of friends.—They all with one voice agreed she was the handsomest woman that had appeared for many years.

Avon is a lucky devil; and yet, hang me if I should not be almost afraid of marrying so brilliant a beauty, lest I should find it impossible to keep her to myself.—'Tis hardly reasonable, faith, to expect constancy from such a wife.

There was another pretty, little, fair, dove-like thing, who sat by her, a Miss Heber, though so far inferior to lady Avon, that I cannot think how I came to recollect her.—When I cast my eyes on her by

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chance, she blushed more than her bright friend did for my presumption.

Mountney seems to have a fancy that way.—He is always saying, you know, that if he ever marries, a tame household thing must be the wife for him.—If so, why did he frown at my freedom with lady Avon? —Let every man mind his own business: mine is the gratification of every wish of my heart.

LETTER

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LETTER XVII.

Miss OLIVIA HEBER to Miss HEBER.

HOW unreasonable are you, my dear Alicia, to complain of the shortness of my letters, when your own contain so few paragraphs? You ought rather to send me your observations on every thing which I communicate to you. Short, however, as your letter is, you have found room to recommend a man to me of whom you know nothing but from the little I have said about him. You shall not chuse for your sister at so great a distance, nor will she fix herself till she has seen more.

Lord Avon has a number of friends, but the most lively—I had almost put an *o* instead of an *i*, into *that* word—is a Sir Charles Sedley.—I cannot pretend to describe either his person or behaviour; there is a nameless something in each of them, which I never

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observed in any other man, and he seems as much taken with our dear Eudocia.—What have I said? — 'Tis well you don't see me, my Alicia—but he really has such a pair of eyes that there is scarce any looking at them.—He would be quite in his element among our young country people, for I never met with any body who loved romping so excessively.—He has been down at Richmond with us a few days, and we have had such races in the garden!—Sir Charles runs after lady Avon, and she flies after me—My lord catches his Eudocia: poor I fall to Mountney's lot, who, when he has said a heap of fine things, lets me go, telling me that I had rather be with Sir Charles.—You cannot see me, sister—but there is no comparison to be made between the two men.

Oh! bless me! Doffy just this moment ran into the room, and peeped over my shoulder before I could hide my letter. She rallies me to death—as Mr. Mountney says, and declares that she will shew shew it to

Sir

THE MASQUERADE. 123

Sir Charles, to let him see what a conquest he has made: I begged and prayed, but in vain—she would not listen to me. Surely, our friend was not always so inflexible.

She hurried out of the room with my letter: I followed her till I was almost out of breath.

Mountney met me; and catching hold of me, asked me what was the matter?

Colouring like fire, I told him the truth—“Lady Avon has stole my letter to my sister.”

“To a lover you mean!” said he, “well, only promise to let me have a sight of it; and I will, this moment, get it from lady Avon, and restore it to you: and no creature else shall see it but the happy man for whom it is designed.”

But I must have my letter back again, without those conditions.

While we were striving who should have their own way, lady Avon carries the letter to my lord, who is all goodness and consideration; and who begged her, with the

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most tender earnestness, to give me back my paper—The wild thing, you know her manner, still refused.

To complete my confusion, in came Sir Charles.

You cannot conceive how I looked; every body pitied me but that thoughtless Dossy—I blushed—I was ready to cry.

Sir Charles perceiving my distress, flew hastily to lady Avon, caught her round the waist with one hand, and declared that he must either have the paper or a kiss.

My lord looked agitated; my lady frowned; but Sir Charles said something so very pleasant upon the occasion, that it disarmed her anger, and she burst into so violent a fit of laughter, that I actually believe he would have stolen the threatened kiss, if my lord's aspect had not awed him: he therefore seized my poor unfortunate letter.

Do but think, Alcey, how I trembled! I felt as if I was sinking to the floor.

Mountney

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Mountney ran to my assistance—breaking from him I cried; “the paper, the paper.”

He was just going to procure it for me from the person who had seized it from her ladyship; when Sir Charles brought it to me, with such a bow—Oh! it had ten thousand meanings in it. But I will not say another word, lest our giddy friend should serve me so again.

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L E T T E R XVIII.

Mr. MOUNTNEY to Colonel ACKWORTH.

HAS Sedley written to you? has he told you that he is in love with lord Avon's wife? Whether he is serious or not I shall not attempt to determine; but this I know, he behaves with great impropriety.

Lady Avon is uncommonly handsome; very young, and naturally of a cheerful temper; of a very lively disposition indeed!—Her vivacity is extremely pleasing, and I firmly believe that she is as innocent as she is alluring: but that wild amorous rogue Sedley takes too much advantage of her free and sprightly behaviour. I see plainly enough that his familiarities make lord Avon exceedingly uneasy, as he is extravagantly fond of her, and they may lead her into indiscretions for which she may be afterwards heartily sorry. If
any

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any mischief arises from those indiscretions, Sir Charles, as the first aggressor, will be answerable for them. Let him, therefore, take care.—You are more intimate with him than I am, and will, I know, from this hint, be considerate enough to put him upon his guard. Lady Avon is, with all her giddiness—but that is rather too strong an expression—a sensible, good-natured woman, and an affectionate wife: she is also conscious of her personal charms, and loves the world.—She has seen little of it; her passion for it is consequently the more easily to be accounted for, and the more excusable. She is fond of dress, diversions, company, and conversation: the two last seem to have the preference, and she does not appear to be sufficiently nice in the choice of her acquaintance, nor to be sensible that it is highly necessary for us to keep some of our thoughts to ourselves, and very imprudent to talk upon every subject to all sorts of people. Lady Avon is certainly too indiscriminately free in her

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behaviour: my lord is, I can see, frequently hurt by that behaviour; and Sedley, I am afraid, is coxcomb enough to take her general freedoms as particular advances to himself: though I'll lay any wager that she never intends to distinguish him by her carriage.

I wish I could say the same of a pretty little artless creature who is her intimate friend, though a very different character, and evidently sighs for Sedley as much as I do for her—I was going to say—but 'tis not come to that yet.—I shall never make myself uneasy about a girl who likes another man better: but if Olivia's heart was at her own disposal, I would try to become master of it, because the gentleness of her temper pleases me; and because I think that her taste and mine are pretty much alike. A man can never be happy with the best woman in the world for his wife, if their opinions and inclinations happen to be totally different.—There is, I doubt, this unsuitableness between lord and lady

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Avon; the former loves the latter too well to be happy himself, or to suffer her to be so. In short, he absolutely teazes her with his tenderness; and 'tis pleasant to hear how archly she rallies him about it: her raillery, however, though extremely delicate, and frequently mingled with fondness, he knows not how to take; and he is, I believe, very often confoundedly chagrined by it.—Sedley avails himself as much as possible of the indiscretion on one side, and of the jealousy on the other.—He does not do as he would be done by, in such a situation; and so pray tell him.

L E T T E R X I X .

Miss OLIVIA HEBER to Miss HEBER.

WE are come to town again, and are always in such a hurry of pleasure, as our dear Eudocia calls it, that we have, I think, hardly time to breathe. She laughs at my complaints of our dissipated life, from morning to night; and tells my lord, whose sentiments correspond with mine upon the occasion, that we have neither of us any taste or spirit. You would wonder, indeed, at her perpetual vivacity—She was always, indeed, by much, the most chearful of us all three; but were you to see her now, you would be quite amazed.

Yesterday, in the afternoon, she declared that she was the happiest creature in the world.

Lord

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Lord Avon, taking her hand, and kissing it, said, "How you transport me, my dearest life, by that declaration! May it ever be in my power to make you happy; to increase your felicity."

He then immediately asked her, if she would go down to his house in Devonshire?

"Oh," cried she, in her lively manner, "I can't think of it: I have not the least desire to leave London;—I find new pleasures here every day."

"Why, you have often told me," replied my lord, gravely, as if not thoroughly pleased with her refusal, "that you were very happy in Derbyshire: you cannot, therefore, have any violent dislike to the country."

"No," answered she, "not as the country. I love the fresh air, I admire fine prospects, I am charmed with rural views, and doat on flowers; but, after all, there is a sameness in the country, which is extremely tiresome.—No—

give me London and all its joys—The perpetual variety here is enchanting,” added she, running to the glass; “but I must go and dress for Soho.—Will you go to-night, my lord?”

“Are you going out again, my dear,” said he; “I was in hopes that you had been so fatigued with the play, and lady Shuffle’s rout together, last night, as to wish to spend this evening at home with me.”

“Only hear him, Olly,” cried she; “to tell me he was in hopes I had been fatigued—I am afraid, my lord, all your good-breeding will be lost in doating,”—added she, with a laugh; “but as long as we spend the evening together, ’tis no matter whether at home or abroad, you know.”

My lord, not being of that opinion, said, “You have often heard me declare myself, madam, no admirer of Mrs. Cornely’s rooms.”

“As

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“As you please, my lord,” replied our sprightly friend, with a smiling curtsy, “then we will leave you to enjoy your hours according to your own taste.”

“I cannot enjoy them without your society, Eudocia,” said he, with a serious air.

“Well now, that is unaccountable to me—I love your company better than any body’s I can name; but yet a little variety now and then, makes it a million times more agreeable: and when I have been galloping half the town over, I have a vast deal more relish for home: it is, therefore, for your interest, my lord, to indulge me in going abroad.”

“I do, I will indulge you in every thing, my life,” said he, fondly; “but if you loved as ardently as I do, Eudocia, you could not bear absence—it would make you as wretched as it makes me.”—

“Not in the least, my lord; our tempers are different, tho’ we are equally affectionate.”

At

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At that moment entered Sir Charles Sedley.

"Here," cried the lively creature ;
"only ask Sir Charles, my lord, if he is not of my way of thinking?"

"I don't want to appeal to a third person, madam," said my lord, peevishly.

"Well, as you please—Come then, Olly, let us go and dress."

"Stay, my lady," cried Sir Charles, catching hold of her hand, "may I not have the honour of hearing in what point you conceived me to be so happy as to think like your ladyship?"

"Pshaw—no—not now,"— answered she, with a lively smile—"I am engaged to the Soho assembly, and I suppose you will be there."

"Undoubtedly," replied Sir Charles, with a look of the greatest satisfaction ;
"I will stay and wait on you."—

My lord fetched a deep sigh, crossed his arms, and walked hastily up and down the room.

We

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We left them, and retired to our respective apartments.

When I was dressed—I was soon dressed—I hurried down to the parlour, not at all liking the appearance of things.

I found my lord sitting in a thoughtful posture, with one leg over the other, and his head leaning upon his hand.

Sir Charles was turning round one of the Chinese figures over the chimney :

As soon as I came in—"Don't you think this mandarin astonishingly agreeable," said he : "how should you like to be kissed by a pretty fellow, with a grey beard and whiskers?" "Come," added he, "you shall try which is most pleasant: let me see you kiss this pretty figure, and I will kiss you."

I broke from him, and going to my lord, whom I greatly pitied, asked him if he was not well.

Down came my lady, before he could answer me, divinely dressed, and blazing with jewels.

Sir

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Sir Charles made her a very high compliment upon her appearance, to which she replied, with a smile, and then turning to my lord, who had not once lifted up his eyes at her entrance—"Bless me! what's the matter, my lord?" said she, going up to him and taking his hand.

"Nothing, madam," replied he, coolly—

"Now you don't tell the truth," said she, sitting down by him, on the sofa.

"I would not interrupt your pleasure," answered he, with no small emotion; "you have promised yourself a great deal in going out; don't let me deprive you of it, since you can find none in staying at home with me."—

The two last words were spoken with a particular emphasis.

My lady then looked grave.

"Nay, my lord, if you are disposed to make a serious affair of it, I must e'en stay at home, I think."—

"No,"—replied my lord, hardly able to articulate, "no, madam, you shall not stay if it is not agreeable to you."— He

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He then turned from her, and she smiled at Sir Charles: but, tho' apparently inattentive, he caught her smile in a moment, rose up again and again, walking discontentedly about the room.

"My dear Olivia," said Eudocia to me, "shall you be much disappointed by staying at home to-night?"

"Not in the least, my lady," said I, pitying poor lord Avon from my heart.

"I beg I may not deprive you of any pleasure," said he.

"I am very indifferent about what is generally called pleasure, my lord; but were I not, I would freely give it up to make you happy with my lady."

"Excellent girl!" said he, faintly, with a deep sigh, looking at his Eudocia, who was chatting with Sir Charles—

Sir Charles, finding her determined to stay, took up his hat and moved off.

Lady Avon then said to me, "Come, Olly, since we cannot dance abroad, let us dance at home," beginning a minuet.

Lord

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Lord Avon, transported at this easy compliance with his will, flew to her, caught her in his arms, gave her a thousand kisses, called her his angel, and begged her to pardon any thing that he might have thrown out to offend her; and to attribute it to the excess of his love.

“ Since it is love alone, my lord, that makes you so stupid, I must excuse you, I think; but ’tis pity that a passion, capable of rendering so many people amiable, should have so different an effect upon you.”

This speech, too thoughtlessly delivered, had almost spoilt all again.

My lord looked exceedingly disconcerted, saying; “ I am most unhappy in displeasing the only person in the world, to whom, I flattered myself, I should always be agreeable.”

She burst out into a loud laugh at him; and had not Mr. Mountney made his appearance, I don’t know how the evening

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evening would have gone off. He and I together, strove with all our powers, to amuse them both. My lady, indeed, can always divert herself, but my lord can receive diversion only from her.

Thus, my dear Alicia, you see, that a marriage, tho' founded on inclination on both sides, does not necessarily produce happiness—I almost begin to think that those are the happiest who never marry, nor indeed, let their thoughts run upon matrimony.—You are not of my mind, I fancy.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

SIR CHARLES SEDLEY to Col. ACKWORTH.

IT is as I said—He is as jealous of her as the devil—So much the better for me—She will be the sooner thrown into my arms.—What a delicious thought!—and yet I must move fair and softly, and let neither of them guess my designs—The dear creature is, I absolutely believe, as far from suspecting any evil, as from intending to commit it; and she, at present, I dare say, prefers this husband of hers to all men. Avon, you know, has every requisite to please; he is young, handsome, and well bred: but there wants a similarity of humour between them—His whole delight is in the possession of such a beautiful creature, but her heart is not entirely devoted to her husband; the pleasures of the world have made a
pretty

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pretty deep impresson upon it.—Only think of a girl bred in the most retired part of Derbyshire, who had scarce seen any human creatures out of her own family; all antiques themselves,—to be brought on a sudden into gay life, and to be exhibited to admiring crowds: married to a man distractedly fond of her, before she had an opportunity of knowing whether he would have been her choice or not; adored and courted as much after marriage as before—(How many women would have their heads turned, so circumstanced!)—Yet I firmly believe, that if he discovered no kind of suspicion, and made no attempts to oppose her inclination, she would still make an excellent wife; ay, as faithful and domestic as if she was ever so ugly—For my part, who am, you know, not fond of tying people together for life, and making them answer for impossibilities; were I obliged to enter into the uncertain state of matrimony, I should much sooner chuse a woman

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man rather deficient in beauty, than remarkable for a fine person ; because I should then have hopes that she would love me near as well as herself—A beautiful mistress, but a plain wife, for me.

Your letter is this moment arrived.—

And so Mountney has been prating to you upon paper, about my behaviour to lady Avon !—What the devil has he to do in the affair ? He is not married to her : and if he and you have conscientious scruples, what are they to me ?—She is the wife of my friend—Very well ; and what's that to the purpose ? I shall not openly come to action, but if she should trip in an unguarded hour—By heavens ! there's rapture in the very idea—she will be a fair prize.—

Olly, as the divine Eudocia calls her, will, I fear, be cursedly in my way : she is, on a nearer acquaintance, a very pretty little delicate creature : and I should not be sorry to take her into the bargain.—She seems to have no sort of aversion to
me,

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me, far from it—but, I doubt, she is too good for me—She has no taste for the pleasures of the world, and provided she lived with the man she loved, she would, I'll venture to affirm, be as happy in a cottage as on a throne. She is tender, compassionate, and mild as a summer breeze; pities Avon, when he is provoked by the lively sallies of Eudocia, and gently endeavours to lower her vivacity, and to render her wit less hurtful, by blunting the edge of it. She is a woman, whom most men would pronounce amiable—Mountney thinks her excessively so—but she is cold and indifferent to him: modest and timid to an extreme, she is almost afraid to hear her own voice.

I surprized her t'other day, singing softly, but like a nightingale, upon my soul, to lady Avon's mandoline — She blushed, as if she had been doing some very bad thing; nor could I prevail on her to warble another note—If I once get her, I dare swear I should keep her all to myself:

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myself: but so many sweets would be quite surfeiting.—What a delicious contrast between her and Eudocia!—Let them both take care of me—The first has nothing but her virtue for her defence; the last relies on her vivacity—No bad armour against a tender passion—But yet I may conquer even her, when she least thinks of being overcome.

LETTER

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LETTER XXI.

From the same to the same.

LORD and lady Avon have had the luckiest falling out for me, that could have happened: only I am afraid that the quarrel, by the officiousness of Olivia, will be made up. I must secure her first, or she will spoil all.

We were in high mirth, t'other night; that is, we four—a very pretty *partie quarrée*.—Mountney out of town—Dancing happened to be the subject—and I, by chance, mentioned quite a new step in the cotillion, which I had learnt at Paris.

“Oh! shew it me, shew it me, dear Sir Charles,” cried Eudocia, starting from her chair.

I was upon my legs in a moment, caught her fine soft hand in mine, and

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by some accident or other—faith I had no design—down we came both together upon the carpet.

This was an opportunity not to be lost, however; and I made the most of it, by stealing such a delicious kiss!—The very remembrance of it fires my soul at this instant.

Up she rose, sat gravely down by my lord, who looked in an agony, and said, “I shall take care how I desire any thing of you again, Sir Charles.”

“I beg your pardon, my charming lady Avon,” said I; “it was a meer accident.”

“Such accidents, Sir,” said my lord, warmly, “are not to be endured.”

“How, my lord!—surely you are not serious about such a trifle.”

“No—no,”—cried she, “it was but a trifle; and therefore we wo’nt hear any more about it.”

This speech put a stop to any farther altercation between us; but it also sealed

up

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up my lord's mouth, who sat sulky, with his eyes fixed upon his wife; while she, recovering all her former chearfulness, chatted with the same freedom and ease, as if nothing had happened.

Finding my lord continue in the sul-
lens, I began to dread the threatened storm, which might, by driving me from the house for ever, entirely demolish my flattering projects: I, therefore, thought it most prudent to make a retreat.

Just when I was on the other side of the parlour door, seeing nobody in the next room, I stepped in to hear how things went.

My lady thus began.

"In the vapours again, my lord? I wonder you are so fond of spending your evenings at home, as they really have so melancholy an effect upon you: being alone, I find."—

"Had I been alone, madam," interrupted he, "I had not, probably, been disgusted at any thing: but 'tis no laugh-
H 2 ing

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ing matter for me, to see such liberties taken with my wife; and to be certain, at the same time, that they are too agreeable to be resisted."

"My poor suspicious dear! could you then really imagine that I was pleased with such liberties, especially when you heard me reprove him for them?"

"And how did you reprove him—Only by laughing off the insult, and chatting with him the next moment, as if you were rather pleased than offended with his impertinence—'Sdeath! such a behaviour is sufficient to encourage all the coxcombs in town to be impudent."

"Hold, my lord; the warmth of your temper about this silly accident, is more injurious to me than the thing itself: and it was the apprehension of that warmth which made me willing, fearful as I was of a quarrel, to smother my resentment."—

"A mighty plausible apology—indeed!—And so I must tamely sit by and
suffer

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suffer fellows to take indecent liberties with my wife, for fear of a quarrel? I would rather face death a thousand times, than bear such treatment; and so would you, if you had not relished his insolence."

"Very well, my lord: you will perhaps repent of this behaviour by and by, when you know that I think the man who dares to suspect me wrongfully, deserves to have his suspicions confirmed."—

At this instant Olivia cried, "Dear lady Avon!"—

My lord answered, somewhat fiercely, "Heavens! madam—Is it possible? Can these be your sentiments? Had I known them before, I should not have had courage to venture upon the woman who entertained them, for a wife."—

"'Tis pity indeed, my lord, for I was your free choice—nay, you forced me from my relations, and almost compelled me to be yours—I could not, in truth, become the wife of any other man, with the least delicacy."—

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Delicacy ! — Delicacy !” replied he, walking about the room with hasty strides—
“ Heavens !—To have all my love, all my doating fondness come to this ? Distraction !—How—how have I been deceived !”

“ No, my lord ; you have not yet been deceived ; but take care you never provoke me to deceive you ; that’s all.”

Here the noise of approaching feet obliged me to remove from my hiding-place : but curious beyond expression, to know the result of this bustle which I had occasioned, I determined to put a good face upon the matter, and to call in the morning.

To my great satisfaction I found Olivia alone, writing.

She looked extremely solemn at me, at first, and rose in order to leave the room, pretending to be engaged ; but I replaced her in her chair, and kept her hand fast, that she might not escape me, while I confessed the thorough *etourderie* of
of

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of my behaviour; swearing that it was entirely unpremeditated, and that I was excessively concerned at having been so unlucky as to produce any disputes between lord and lady Avon, for whom I had so sincere an esteem.

“Dispute!” cried she, with looks of surprize—

“Yes, my dear Miss Heber,” said I: “to confess the truth, I heard a little of it before I went out of the house—In short, George, I feigned so much contrition, and was so soft, and so soothing, and pressed her hand so often to my bosom and my lips, that the dear, little melting rogue—Upon my life she is very handsome—told me every thing: that is, she, in general terms, told me my lord was highly offended with my lady, for taking my part—(mind that Ackworth)—and my lady was too warm—Charming creature! She was angry with the poor devil of a husband, for interfering where he had no business—adding, that she had

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endeavoured, as much as possible, to make them as good friends as ever.—(What a sweet girl is this Olivia!) and that she had left them as happy as she wished them to be.—Not a syllable do I believe of the last words.

The entrance of some morning visitors, alias intruders, prevented my hearing any farther particulars. Swearing again that I meant nothing, and that my lord was wrong to be so alarmed at a meer romping bout, I left her; left her, if I am not much mistaken, with deep impressions in my favour.—I took care to whisper a few tender things in her ear, which brought such sighs from her pretty gentle heart.—Poor Olivia!—But she need not sigh; I have love enough for them both: a devilish deal of fire in my composition—And here you have the first part of the Jealous Husband.—

LETTER

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LETTER XXII.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

OH! my friend, I have been half distracted since you left me, and am not yet the man I was — I fear I never shall be so again. — You well know with what ardor I doat upon my Eudocia, who, every moment since the blest one which gave her to my arms, has been improving both upon my fancy and my heart. Yet, though I joy in her vivacity, and think it gives new charms to her features; I sometimes tremble lest it should carry her too far. I believe, indeed, that she is as innocent as she is lovely, but I am afraid that her sprightliness may be looked upon as an encouragement to coxcombs to flutter about her; nay it certainly does encourage them. — I almost envy every man the pleasure of beholding her.

H 5

Sedley

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Sedley is too particular in his behaviour to her; and she, from meer inattention, or from her lively disposition, which perpetually prompts her to chat with every body who comes in her way, does not check his freedoms so much as I could wish. He is very apt to be impertinent in his carriage to women.—He was so, t'other night, to a great degree, to Eudocia.—He affected to laugh off his insolence, which I would have resented had not my wife stopped me.—Her resistance and raillery together, threw me into such a disturbed state that I scarce knew what I said.—During the heat of my passion, I upbraided her with having appeared pleased with Sedley's behaviour. She, though good-natured, is very warm and hasty also; and therefore replied in a manner which rather whetted than allayed my fury — and I was weak enough to let out a wish that I had never married her.—She then accused me of having clandestinely taken her from her family.—One indiscreet word commonly produces another, and

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and neither of us were prudent enough to stop: so that things grew from bad to worse; and I actually began to fear that she would act agreeably to her threats. Under such a terrifying apprehension, therefore; for she is, you know, absolutely necessary to my existence, I became silent. —She affected, at the same time, a total indifference; took no notice of me, but talked to Olivia, who endeavoured, by several little arts, to draw me into the conversation. That girl has a heavenly temper; but then, she is too tame a character to please. She wants my Eudocia's vivacity and variety—and yet you will tell me that the tortures of which I complain arise from the vivacity which I admire—Would she be sprightly only with me!—But I want impossibilities.

However, I availed myself of Olivia's prudent and obliging conduct, in order to make my peace with my own dear girl; but she did not pay any sort of regard to me—she smiled with the utmost satisfaction

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at her friend, but would not cast a single glance on me.

I caught her hand more than once, as I sat by her, but she drew it back with an angry hastiness.

Supper came, at last, to my relief—she sat down to table with the greatest composure, and ate as if nothing had happened, while I was too much agitated to swallow a morsel.—She did not even condescend to mention my not eating; but behaved, before the servants, as usual, talking of trivial things.—I was charmed at her discretion, while I was pained by her indifference; being ever of opinion that domestic misunderstandings, as well as domestic endearments, should, if possible, be kept private.

When the cloth was taken away, finding myself unable to check my raptures any longer, I went to take her in my arms, and seal our reconciliation with an ardent kiss.—She made a resistance which both surprised and shocked me.

“Have

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“Have I then offended in a manner never to be forgiven, my life?” said I, with looks which discovered every sensation of my heart, yearning for pardon and a return of love.—“Tell me, my Eudocia, tell me only what I shall do to merit the forgiveness for which I ask—I cannot live and be thus treated with the coldest neglect—by heavens, it is not to be endured.”

Having uttered those words, I turned from her to hide emotions which I was, at once, ashamed and afraid to discover. I could hardly support myself: my whole frame shook.

“Do you not think now,” said she with her sweet enchanting voice, “that you have been wrong in flying into such a passion, only because I loved you too well to suffer you to fight: for a duel must have ensued, if your resentment had been indulged; and upon my account too, against a giddy-headed young fellow, who is too thoughtless to do any thing with any meaning in it.”

I would

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I would hear no more—I pressed her, no longer reluctant to my doating bosom, and almost stifled her with kisses; and as soon as I could recover my breath, begged her, a thousand times, to pardon a folly for which I hated myself more than she could, possibly, hate me; as I knew well the goodness of her heart.

“How can you talk of hating?” replied she, laying her hand carelessly on my shoulder, and looking up to me with eyes so bright, and yet so sweetly tender, while her lovely mouth was dimpled with the smiles of love and good-humour, that I never felt such an ecstatic moment. I could have looked away my life, so strongly were my eyes attracted to her, had not my other senses urged me to employ my time much better.—I kissed with transport inexpressible, those enchanting eyes which derived new lustre for my endearments. She appeared, herself, to enjoy with inconceivable delight, every proof of my tenderness.

On

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On a sudden, starting from me, she cried, looking at once fondly and archly at me, "you forgot Olivia, my lord."

I had, indeed, forgot all the world but my adorable angel. Thinking, however, some apology necessary to that amiable girl who had done her part towards so delicious a reconciliation, I made the best I could think of, and we spent the remainder of the evening in the most agreeable chat.

Sedley called, the next morning, when I was out, but she did not come down to him.

He now pretends to make love, seriously, to Olivia, telling me, that on finding her coy, he paid his court to lady Avon to induce her to be his friend, and to soften Miss Heber's heart in his favour.

I don't know how to believe a syllable of all this: I rather am of opinion that Olivia likes him. He is, you know, the sort of man who generally captivates the other sex: he has a mighty specious, insinuating way

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way of behaving to them. Such a fellow often supplants a more valuable and amiable competitor. Sedley is such an artful devil; and has a head so full of expedients! never out of spirits—never out of countenance—actually, I don't believe he feels for any human creature but himself—the innocent, gentle Olivia, is too good for him.

My wife has got a new admirer—no wonder—every man who sees her must acknowledge the superiority of her beauty.

The earl of Chester saw her at the opera t'other night, joined us, and said so many fine things, that I was glad to carry her home—and yet, Mountney, I do not distrust her—I distrust myself. I happened to see her upon her first appearance in the world, before she had time to look about her. She was the choice of my heart; but possibly, if she had not been taken, as it were, by surprise, I should not have been the choice of hers. From this supposition arise very tormenting sensations; and I

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am now greatly alarmed lest she should see a man more agreeable in her eyes ; a man who may, perhaps, make her feel that lively passion for him which I ever felt, which I still feel for her.—What a distracting apprehension—I will not indulge it—I hope I have no reason to be alarmed—at present, she is most obliging, and the affection which she discovers for me—if it is not sincere, she is the most finished hypocrite in the universe. She has not, indeed, the melting sensibility of some women ; but sensibility is not in our power—I love her, however, almost to idolatry—yet while I adore her, I tremble.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXIII.

Sir CHARLES SEDLEY to Col. ACKWORTH.

MATTERS are in a train—Now I go on swimmingly with Olivia : if she does not yield too soon I may carry my point : I have no other fear.—Don't mistake me, George, I would not be thought to insinuate any thing to lessen the lady's virtue. She is, I believe, as chaste as unfun-
 nished snow—I could, indeed, melt her to my wishes, in a short time, I fancy, but I am, at present, to personate the hon-our-able lover ; I should act quite out of character, in expecting indiscretions ; though your very tender lovers do not always keep up their decorums with the strictest propriety : and it has happened that a lady closely besieged has made a quick surrender.—You may imagine now, perhaps, that the surrender is the pleasantest part of the affair—I should think

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think so myself, probably, in any other situation, but as I am now circumstanced—I think in a very different manner; Eudocia—you understand me—is the noble game I have in view. Olivia only serves to facilitate my designs, by decoying it into my toils. When I have done with the former, however, the latter will drop into my mouth of course: but they must fall decently, and in order. Were I to begin with Olivia, and should she happen to tell tales—who can trust a woman?—I should be thrown out—jockeyed—routed horse and foot.—Eudocia is quite a different sort of person; by no means easily to be seduced—great art and much address will be necessary to gain her: but if I succeed, the pleasure, the honour resulting from my victory will largely repay me for all my trouble. The worst of it is, I have no room to hope for success, but by complaining to her ladyship of Miss Heber's shyness, and indifference, and prevailing on her to be my friend, to persuade the dear creature
to

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to listen to me.—Now the truth is, the dear creature doats on me already, and sucks in such comfortable draughts of flattery from my deluding tongue ; and so much love from my languishing eyes, that she makes an intercessor altogether an unnecessary being.

I must be blind : I must pretend to have met with infinite discouragement from my little, tender love-sick girl—She has, indeed, repulsed me more than once, by telling that she was not her own mistress, and that her father alone had a right to dispose of her.—But I must keep clear of making application to him, if possible—Hitherto I have done it by declaring that I love her with too much delicacy to be contented merely with her father's consent ; and that I must be certain of having entirely won her heart, before I offered any proposals to him—hoping he can have no objection to my fortune, &c. &c. if she has none.

Thus far I have proceeded with tolerable dexterity ; but these modest girls are so pressing,

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pressing, that really they put a man quite out of countenance. They have not the least idea of doing the business, and being snug. As soon as the word *love* is out of your mouth, *up* bounces Miss with her face as red as a turkey-cock, and cries, "Oh, Sir! you must speak to my father." I actually wonder they are not ashamed; but I shall teach Miss Olivia a little more decency, before I have done with her; and so good night.—

Harkee, George—no more preaching. I hope you don't communicate what I write under the seal of secrecy to Mountney.—I shall then, indeed, be blown to the devil.—But I know you are a man of honour.

LETTER

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LETTER XXIV.

MISS OLIVIA HEBER to Miss HEBER.

I HAVE taken up and laid down my pen, twenty times : I want to open my heart to you, my dear sister—but I know not how to begin—I cannot, however, be easy, till I have your sentiments upon an affair which engrosses my attention.

I have frequently, you know, mentioned Sir Charles Sedley, in my letters, as the most agreeable of men. You must remember also, that I told you he was a great admirer of lady Avon.—He is so—every body indeed, admires her, because she is so very handsome; but he now declares and protests, from morning to night, that he loves only me: adding that he must pay court to my lady, in order to be permitted to see me at her house; and that he must admire and esteem my charming friend, for my sake.

I hope

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I hope he does not deceive me, my Alcey, for I feel a partiality in his favour which I cannot describe.—I would have referred him to my father: certainly my father cannot reject a man of his fashion and fortune—I have not told him my sentiments yet—Time enough;—but tho' I have not declared the secrets of my heart with my tongue, every look, every motion will, I am afraid, betray me—When he is absent, my spirits are sunk to a degree beyond expression; when he returns, tho' expected, my heart flutters; my face glows, and I wish to hide myself any where from his observation. Dossy, who rallies every body, does not even spare her poor friend.

Sir Charles, finding me in confusion this morning, told me that he would talk to lady Avon upon this subject, and that if she would not mind him, he would punish her for it; but I begged him to let her alone, lest my lord, who is certainly inclined to be jealous, should be uneasy.

“ You

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“ You are quite mistaken,” replied he, “ my lord knows where my heart is, too well, to have any disagreeable suspicions; he knows it is in that dear bosom,” continued he, pressing me in his arms, and attempting to kiss my neck.

I broke from him hastily, tho’ I trembled so much that I could hardly support myself—

He was quite offended.

“ I see plainly that I shall never have your heart, Miss Heber, tho’ you have mine.”

What could I do, Alicia? I was ashamed to tell him that he had it, lest he should have asked for something which could not be granted.

In this manner he frequently serves me, and then runs to lady Avon, and will not speak to me for an hour or two, perhaps; tho’ he sees I am ready to die with vexation for having made him so angry.

Thus

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Thus am I continually perplexed—Do, tell me, my Alicia, how I ought to behave to this inconsistent, charming man?

Dossy shakes her head at me, and bids me beware of men—She even gave a hint that she feared Sir Charles did not love me as well as I loved him.—I was weak enough to cry the whole day after that speech.

He caught me in tears; and was so soothing and tender, that I had all the reason in the world to be satisfied with him. To obtain his pardon (tho' I was not angry with him—I could not be angry) he gave me his picture in miniature.—If I could bring myself to part with it a moment, I would send it to you, that you might see I am not too partial.—But I can't send you his voice, his wit, his enchanting manner of saying and doing the most trifling things—How various are his powers of charming, of which I cannot make you sensible, by describing them! From what I have said,

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however, you may be able to give me your opinion; and then I shall see whether it agrees with my Eudocia's or my own.— Surely she *cannot* be displeased at his prepossession in my favour—She thinks him agreeable and lively; but I am certain that tho' she loves to talk and laugh with every body, lord Avon is the unrivalled possessor, the sole master of her heart.

LETTER

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LETTER XXV.

Lady AVON to Miss HEBER.

EXCUSE me, my dear friend, for not having corresponded with you so regularly as I ought to have done—Were you here, and I sincerely wish you was here, you would be convinced that leisure is very scarce among us—I, at least, find my hours prodigiously taken up; and yet I cannot give a very good account of myself in the employment of them.

We spend the day, and, I believe I may say, a great part of the night here, in a very pleasant manner: but whether we spend our time in a rational manner, I will not determine.—I have something else to write about.

I am, at present, under a real concern for our dear Olivia.—You know how af-

I 2 fectionately

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fectionately I love her—She is, I am afraid, too much attached to a man, of whom I have not the best opinion, tho' I will allow him to be agreeable;—but what are the most pleasing accomplishments, when they are not accompanied with virtuous principles! Not that I am absolutely sure of his being entirely destitute of those principles; but from his conduct, I cannot help entertaining some doubts, which I would freely communicate to Olivia, were not a great deal of delicacy necessary in the communication of them, in order to prevent a diminution of our friendship.—However, tho' I cannot properly tell her what I think, I can open my heart to you; and then you will naturally act with your usual good sense and propriety upon the occasion.

Soon after my marriage, Sir Charles Sedley, in the character of my lord's friend, was introduced to me:—As his lordship had carried me to Sir Charles's house, during

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during his absence from England, from the masquerade, common politeness required his admission at his return. He is, undoubtedly, agreeable, and has an easy becoming carelessness in his behaviour, which apologizes for half his foibles—Yet he is, by no means, a man to be trusted—At first, I myself, from not being acquainted with his licentious disposition and free way of thinking, treated him with more consideration than he deserved: and since—to confess the truth, my Alicia, lord Avon took it into his head to suspect me of encouraging this very man—His suspicions provoked me so much, as I knew myself to be perfectly innocent, that I believe I carried my resentment a little too far; for tho' I have not the smallest inclination for Sedley, he has discovered but too much his partiality to me; and discovers it even at the very moment while he is pretending to make honourable addresses to Olivia, who is as much in love with him as she

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can possibly be.—Were I, therefore, to endeavour to make her sensible of the more than impropriety, the infamy of his conduct, by enumerating all the little artifices he has had recourse to, in order to deceive her, under the flimzy pretence of securing my friendship purely on her account; she would, most probably, imagine that I either really liked him myself, or that my monstrous vanity induced me to conclude he actually preferred me to her. My frankness would, consequently, rather lessen me in her eyes than be of any service to her.

I sometimes think that were I to inform my lord of my suspicions, he might, with much propriety, speak to Sir Charles, and let him know that he was not ignorant of the indiscreetness of his behaviour.—But then, will not my lord's suspicions be confirmed; and may not the life of a man, whom I love more than my own, be endangered in a duel?—No other way is left for me but this—I have acquainted

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quainted you with the exact situation of things here at present; and I beg you would act as you think best with regard to Olivia, and inform me of your sentiments.—

If you mention what I have written to you, that Sir Charles, tho' a lively, agreeable man, is not likely to make a desirable husband, my private consultation with you will be discovered. — I give you leave, however, to disclose what I have told you, or what other hints you judge proper to apprise her of her danger. — I really begin to imagine that Sir Charles does not intend to marry at all. — But, in short, you would give me the greatest pleasure by coming up to town, and staying some time with me.—Come and see us all together: you will then see with your own eyes whether I am right or wrong.

My lord frequently asks me when he is to have the happiness of being acquainted

I 4

with

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with my other agreeable friend—Come, therefore, my dear Alicia; answer for yourself, and fly to increase the felicity of,

Your ever affectionate,

E. AVON.

LETTER

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L E T T E R XXVI.

From the same to the same.

AS I have not heard from you, agreeably to my expectations, and as Sir Charles still continues to impose upon Olivia with his pretended addresses,—the poor girl begins to be very wretched on his account—I have taken a step, which you may, perhaps, think an odd one.

I have communicated my thoughts on this affair to Mr. Mountney, who is come to town for a few days—My lord, I know, reposes a confidence in him, and he seems to have a sincere friendship for us both—He has an abrupt way of behaving sometimes ; but he may, I believe, be depended upon. Besides, he is a great admirer of Olivia, and would be very sorry to see her unhappy.

When I told him that I imagined Sedley had no honourable designs on any woman, but inclined to take advantage of the whole sex;—he replied that he was extremely glad to find I so perfectly understood his character—"Since you have done me the honour, madam," continued he, "to place so much confidence in me, I hope you will give me leave, in return, to be very free with your ladyship—As lord Avon is certainly not a little affected by your permitting Sir Charles's affiduities, let me intreat you, without being thought impertinent, to suffer them no longer."

"Had my lord never distrusted me, Sir," said I, "he would have had no reason to complain; for I was as much above encouraging Sir Charles's freedoms, as he was uneasy at them—But I was hurt at being suspected; neither could I bear to occasion a difference between my lord, and the man whom he called his friend. My lord must have a very slight opinion
of

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of me; indeed, to suppose that I meant to encourage any thing more than a little amusement with Sedley. I know how to hinder him from taking any farther liberties with me; but I can't prevent his imposing upon my dear Olivia, who is too partial to him, to look upon him in the light I do; and she may, possibly, think me guilty of the greatest want of affection, in attempting to deprive her of a lover so dear to her."

Mountney then told me, that he believed he could come at Sir Charles's real designs; but added, very seriously, that the discovery might occasion a little bloodshed, perhaps, before it could be prevented.—

Having uttered those words he hurried towards the door, to procure the information I had seemed desirous to receive.

I caught him by the arm, "Stay, Sir, for heaven's sake," cried I, "do not throw yourself and your friends into such dangerous situations, meerly"—

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At that moment, while I had hold of Mountney's arm, my lord came in.

I coloured (since I was suspected, I am become quite a coward) and let Mountney go—who flew out of the room, hardly taking notice of my lord.—

“What's the matter?” said my lord, looking earnestly at me, “what mighty secret is there between you?”

“No secret at all,” replied I, smiling, in order to try him, “cannot you trust me with your and my best friend?”

“And why your best friend, Eudocia? can you have a better friend than myself?” said he, with a look of such anxious tenderness, that I actually felt for him: yet I could not help telling him “that he was always too serious about things which only excited my mirth.—“But come, my lord,” continued I, “do compose yourself: if Mountney is your friend he must be mine also: you are jealous of every man who speaks to me: when do you see me jealous of you? Were you to say twenty fine soft things

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things to Olivia, or any other woman, I should not give myself a moment's concern about it."

"You will never have occasion, as I can see nobody half so amiable as you."

"Oh, you flatterer!" said I, "while you are finding fault with my conduct, how can I believe you?"

"Not finding fault, Eudocia; only wondering at it; we may wonder when we most admire—

"And when we least approve—but come, my lord, let us call another subject."

And so, my dear, I instantly turned the conversation.—By the above dialogue which passed between us, and which I assure you is truly matrimonial; so much experience have I gained by living in the world, you will see that the dearest of friends, and the fondest of lovers, will think very differently at different times, and in particular situations; and that I must, to avoid giving any uneasiness, converse with no male or female,

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male, with no human being; as he loves me too well to let any body look at me, or speak to me.

Certainly, the masquerade-night was the happiest night of my life—I have never been the same free, unconfined creature since; and so I have told him a thousand times.

Thus you see, Alicia, a woman may be loved too much as well as too little.—Poor Olly never dreams, I dare say, of being too much loved.—However, if I can but make this Sedley appear to her in his true colours, I shall not mind a little brush with my lord about *my* secret.—By serving my friend, without endangering my husband, I shall be sufficiently rewarded; when my lord is acquainted with my motives, he will, perhaps, thank me for my conduct; though, on second thoughts, he may even then, be offended at my being obliged to any body but himself.—'Tis actually a pity that a man so amiable in every other respect, should be so extremely narrow in his
 sen-

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sentiments upon this one point—and yet, could he see my heart, and know how highly I prize him—But I have said enough to put you out of conceit with men: so adieu!

IN CONTINUATION.

OLLY has, this moment, entered my dressing-room, with a letter in her hand from you—She was very unwilling to shew it to me, as it contained your entire disapprobation of Sedley's addressee to her as a lover, without the consent of her father.—You could not have put the affair upon a better footing.—I should have behaved exactly in the same manner to her myself, had I not been apprehensive of her supposing that I wished to engross all his flattery. She is just now in a terrible dilemma, and has asked my advice.—I declared freely that I was of your way of thinking upon the occasion—I could very decently, you know, be your second—and she has promised—but feebly—to hear him no more till he is authorized

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thorized by her father—I much doubt, however, whether a single glance, his eyes being very seducing, would not overturn all her resolution in a moment. I wonder why men have such power given them only for mischievous purposes: if lord Avon had not been much superior to Sedley, by the brightness of his eyes, as in every other shape, I had been still, I believe, unmarried.—I should have felt no sorrow—no care—I should have been thought innocent, as I really am—whereas now, every look, every word, every action, must be guarded.

Mountney is gone out of town: till he returns, therefore, we have nothing but Olivia's own fortitude to trust to; and fortitude is not frequently met with in a girl who is violently in love. Once more, adieu.

LETTER

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LETTER XXVII.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

I NEVER was truly wretched till this moment—Now my misery is complete!

I have been very much to blame—my behaviour has been wrong—I have acknowledged it: I have owned myself to be highly censurable, and have implored forgiveness—no acknowledgments, no concessions, no solicitations have any effect upon her: she is inexorable, and I am undone.—Come, therefore, dear Mountney: you may, perhaps, by interceding for me, procure the so much wished-for pardon.—But, in the first place, hear the crimes of which I have been guilty.

You are no stranger to my suspicions concerning Sedley, ever since he discovered himself to be so extravagant an admirer of Eudocia's charms.—Who, indeed, can behold

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behold her, who can listen to her without the highest admiration?—But he discovered too much sensibility, too much passion; and you well know how I feared that he might, as he has bright parts, and never at a loss for language, have said something to make an impression on her mind, fatal to my repose. His behaviour has been certainly so very particular, so extremely insinuating, that I felt a thousand terrors, lest that behaviour should prove as successful as he, undoubtedly, wishes it to be.—You will say, perhaps, that I have been ingeniously tormenting myself with the wild suggestions of an alarmed imagination.—But to the point—

When I came home last night, I enquired immediately after my lady; “where is she, Bingley?”

Bingley answered, “In her dressing room.”

I flew up stairs, with all the eagerness of love—as I think every minute an age, till I behold her, after ever so short an absence.

When

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When I came to the door I found it a-jar, and heard her and Olivia talking very fast.—

As a large skreen concealed me from them, I stopped, in order to be acquainted with the subject on which their tongues were employed.

With a voice most enchantingly soft, Eudocia cried, “Is he not charming?”

I started at this interrogation: who is this charming he?—

I was absolutely distracted with jealousy and rage; and still wilder to know who this fellow was of whom my wife spoke so feelingly.

Just as I was determined to risque every thing for a discovery, I perceived the candle glimmer through a hole in the skreen.

I fixed my eye close to it, and saw both their heads together, hanging over a miniature which my wife held in her hand. I was sure it could not be my picture, because that which I presented to her was much smaller, for her bracelet, and set with diamonds;

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monds; and therefore concluded it to be Sedley's, which he had given to my wife, though till then, I thought he had given it to Miss Heber.

Stung with a fury which I could no way conquer, I rushed into the room; and without allowing Eudocia time to make her defence, flew out into the most violent invectives against her and Sedley.—I repeated loudly what I had just heard her say; and accused her, in the most violent terms, of being false to me, false too with the man who was of all men the least likely to deserve to return her love. I cursed, in the bitterest language, not only him, but myself, for being such an egregious fool as to suppose her capable of meriting the sincere and tender passion I had, from the first commencement of our acquaintance, felt for her; and which I was sensible, I told her, I should feel, in spite of her caprice and ingratitude, to the last moment of my existence; though I could tear my heart from

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from my bosom, for having brought such exquisite misery upon me.

With such severe expressions I walked up and down the room, smarting under the agony of my mind.

They both stared at me, and at each other alternately, as struck with the greatest astonishment, at my behaviour.

You may well look, madam, but by heaven! I have said far too little about a crime of which you cannot but be conscious; a crime never to be atoned for.

I stopped here at last—meerly for want of breath—

Throwing myself into a chair, I felt my spirit so agitated, that I was hardly alive.

For some time they suffered me to remain in this tortured state.

At length, my Eudocia came up to me with the picture in her hand, and said, "After all you have uttered against me, my lord, I might certainly be excused from making the slightest attempt to undeceive you: especially as I know myself to be entirely

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tirely innocent: but I have too great a regard for my own reputation, to let it remain questionable, after having been so unjustly vilified. I will, therefore, convince you of your rashness, and the absurd impetuosity of your carriage; assuring you, at the same time, that you shall never treat me in the same manner again."

She then held up the miniature to my eyes.

What words can express my astonishment, when I saw my own portrait, in the dress I wore at the masquerade!

"There, my lord," said she, "it is your own picture which you see, and which has thrown you into so furious a passion. Your behaviour has been in the highest degree unpardonable, because nothing was said or done on my side, justly to provoke it. Recollect, my lord, that I asked you for your picture in your masquerade dress, the dress in which I first saw you; recollect also that you excused yourself by saying that you did not like to wear it for life.

You

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You now will wear it for life, my lord ; and I wish you may not repent of your unjustifiable proceedings, as bitterly as I do of my connections with so capricious, so jealous, a man."

With these words she left me rooted to the floor, and pierced with emotions not to be conceived.—Struck with the outrage which I had committed against reason and against justice, I hurried after her into her chamber, which Olivia quitted on my entrance.

Throwing myself at her feet, I, in the most submissive and earnest terms, implored her pardon.

She seemed to shake me from her, and at the same time said, " Rise, my lord : if you lie here till to-morrow, you will not alter my resolution ; it is fixed—I will no longer stay with a man who suspects me of the most ridiculous of all follies, as well as of the grossest of all crimes ; and who can neither restrain his jealousy nor his anger, within the bounds of decency."

She

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She then would have flung from me out of the room ; but I crept after her on my knees, holding her by her gown, and swearing by every thing sacred, that I never would leave her till she forgave me for a crime of which I had been guilty from the excess alone of my love for her.

I talked to no purpose : she looked down upon me with a cold, with a freezing indifference, which stabbed me to the soul. Had she been irritated, I should have hoped, that on the abatement of her anger she would have relented ; but her steady calmness distracted me : I despaired of a reconciliation.

I rose, and walked up and down the room, agitated almost to madness—She, very composedly, wishing me a good night, was going to leave me ; I stopped her instantly, crying, my life, whither are you going : it is late. I will retire while you undress.

“ You need not go,” said she, “ I shall sleep with Olivia.”

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"Then I shall never sleep again," cried I; "but by heavens! you shall not leave me; you are my wife, lady Avon, and I have, as a husband, a right to insist upon sharing your bed."

"When you are in your senses, my lord," replied she, calmly, "you shall share it; but I will not trust myself with a madman."

"I am not mad, indeed I am not, my dearest," said I; "greatly have I been mistaken, and much too warm, but my repentance and submission will, I hope, make amends for all my offences. Do not, do not think of leaving me, my Eudocia, unless you are determined to drive me absolutely to despair.—You see I am calm and penitent; but if you attempt to deprive me of the blessing I have enjoyed ever since you were mine, of passing the night by your sweet side, you know not to what desperate action you may impel me; for not all the powers on earth shall force you from my fond arms."

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"I swear

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“ I swear then, in my turn,” said she; while her bright eyes almost struck fire, “ that I will not sleep in the same bed with you this night.”

“ You shall not then, my angel—I will sit up, and watch by your side every night, till your dear relenting heart obliges you to pardon and receive a miserable wretch, banished from your arms—to pardon me for a behaviour, occasioned entirely by the uncommon ardor of my affection.— I will call Loyd, however, to undress you, and retire to another apartment, in the mean time.

She made no answer.

I rang the bell.

When Loyd came in at the chamber door, I double-locked it, and putting the key in my pocket, left her.

I did not hear my lady say any thing to her woman, who in less than half an hour came thro’ the dressing-room to go down stairs.—

I said

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I said not a syllable to her—Hurrying into the chamber, I was extremely surprised to see Eudocia sitting quietly in a chair, in her night-dress.

I declared the utmost surprize at finding her still sitting up, and had recourse to all the eloquence I was master of, to prevail on her to go to bed as usual. All my eloquence was insufficient; I talked to no purpose. She positively refused.

I was now in an agony not to be described, lest she should by a firm, by an obstinate adherence to this resolution, injure her health: especially as the adherence to it might, in her condition, prove fatal.

No words can paint the anguish of my mind, when I reflect upon my past rash, impetuous conduct; I shuddered to think of the dreadful consequences which might, possibly, which would, probably, result from it.—

For above two hours, I am sure, I was upon my knees, intreating her with the

tendereſt, the moſt affectionate importunity, not to hazard her health by ſitting up beyond the uſual time ; ſwearing ſolemnly, that tho' I ſhould be ſupremely wretched in feeling ſo ſeverely the weight of her reſentment, I would patiently remain with her if ſhe would but try to get a little reſt.

At laſt ſhe roſe.

I offered to help her to undreſs, as ſhe told me that ſhe had diſmiſſed Loyd for the night, except any new outrage on my part ſhould oblige her to call for aſſiſtance.—

She begged me to let her alone, and to retire into the adjoining room, ſince I inſiſted upon her going to bed : but proteſted that if I came near her, ſhe would run to Olivia's chamber, and ſee me no more.

I ſubmitted to every thing, in order to preſerve her health, which I prized at ſo high a rate, and concerning which I had

the

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the most alarming apprehensions ; and, after a reasonable absence, returned.

I then threw myself into a chair by the bed-side, and spent the night in a state of mind not easily to be conceived.

The poor, dear, ill-used creature never slept at all : yet made short, sometimes no replies to what I said to her : and before the customary hour of rising, intreated me to leave her, as she was going to ring for Loyd.

I again conjured her to pardon me, or, at least, to promise me forgiveness, when she thought I had suffered sufficiently for what I had done ; and begged as hard for a single kiss, as if I had been begging for my life.—

She made no answer, but buried her sweet face under the bed-cloaths—So that finding I only wearied both her and myself, I left her, and sent immediately to desire your company.

To my unspeakable vexation, I was informed that you was out of town.

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As neither my wife nor Olivia came to breakfast, as usual, when I had waited till I was tired, I rang the bell, and bade Bingley enquire if his lady breakfasted above or below.—

He replied that my lady and Miss Heber were gone out of town.

Imagine the surprize and shock which this intelligence gave me!—I repeated the poor fellow's words (who looked almost as much astonished as myself) several times, before I even thought of asking whither they were gone, cursing myself all the while for being such a blockhead, as to sit in the back-parlour without suspecting her of having had such a design.

I then asked him, with as little sharpness as I could upon the mortifying occasion, (for I knew he had a regard for me) how he came not to inform me that his lady was going out of town; and when she gave orders for the carriage?

In

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In answer to the first question, he said, that he was ignorant of my not being to go with her; and to the second, that while I was dressing, she sent Loyd to bid John get the post-chariot and four horses ready, immediately, to go a long journey; adding, that when she got into the chariot, she ordered the drivers to carry her to Barnet, with all possible expedition.

Only conceive how this information, after what had passed between us, distressed me! I sunk back in my chair, overwhelmed with grief, shame, and remorse.

When I had given strict commands to be denied to every body but you, I sat down to write; and I now intreat you to come to me as soon as you have read this letter—Come, and consider with me what method I can take, which will be the most likely to soften the heart of my dear offended girl.—

Oh! Mountney! what would I give for the return of those moments, when

K 4

I flat-

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I flattered myself that I was beloved almost as well as I loved!—Could they but return—But my brain is disordered—I sicken at reflection—My pen drops from my hand.

LETTER

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L E T T E R XXVIII.

Mr. MOUNTNEY to Colonel ACKWORTH.

AS you was with me when I received lord Avon's letter, and expressed your concern with an uncommon warmth of friendship upon the disagreeable occasion, just too when we were both going to see him; I have taken up my pen, to give you the desired information, with regard to our transactions in so displeasing an affair. .

I really found him much worse than I expected. . He was pale, and sunk, and had such a tremor upon his spirits, that I was excessively alarmed. .

In the first place I intreated him to go to bed, and to send for a physician; it was a considerable time, however, before I could prevail on him to comply with my requests: nor would he comply with

K 5

them,

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them, till I had promised to wait on my lady, and to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation—But till we had discovered her route, nothing could be done towards the completion of his wishes.—Before I came, indeed, my lord had heard, from a messenger whom he dispatched in pursuit of her, that she breakfasted at Barnet, in the way to Derby.—

On his acquainting me with that intelligence, I strove to persuade him to make himself easy and to get well—"I will go down after her directly, and say whatever you wish me to say to her."

Instead of being satisfied, agreeably to my expectations, he rose and replied, "You shall not go alone: I will accompany you."

The doctor, who that moment entered the room, and to whom I communicated his resolution, declared that his life would be in the greatest danger, if he attempted to travel; that he was in a high fever, and that

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that such a journey would inevitably kill him.

I made no reply till the doctor was gone, and then told him that I would set out post, overtake my lady, and bring her back directly.

“ You talk, my dear friend,” said he, “ in a kind, in an affectionate manner, but you do not know to what a degree she is incensed against me—She will never return—no—I will go with you ; and if I cannot move her to pity, and to forgive me, die at her feet—I feel I cannot live without her—She is my life, my all.”—

I was obliged to be peremptory—“ You shall not go, I swear, by every thing serious; but if you will be governable, and keep yourself quiet till to-morrow, and consent to take some gentle remedies, I will venture to set out with you, provided you will agree to make the journey by easy stages.”

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With the utmost difficulty I brought him to let me carry my scheme into execution, on those conditions; and, notwithstanding his violent impatience, got him within a few miles of Thorn-Wood, in three days; tho' he made me almost mad with his furious and peevish expressions against the slowness of my movements.—

When I had proceeded so far, I persuaded him to rest where he was, while I went and ensured him a good reception.

He shook his head, and being exceedingly ill, was but just able to tell me what he wished I would say from him to Eudocia.

I found Eudocia at Thorn-Wood, an old rustic mansion; part of her grandfather's estate, and of her jointure.

She received me very politely, on my sending in my name—Nobody was with her but the pretty little lovesick Olivia, who looked like a beautiful corpse.

I soon

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I soon opened the business I came about, telling her to what a condition my lord's rashness and her resentment had reduced him; telling her that if she persisted in refusing to come to any accommodation, she would, in a very short time, be a widow; as he was already so dangerously ill, that the doctors could not give any hopes of his recovery.

She started—her fine face glowed like crimson in a moment, and was alternately pale and red—She trembled all over.

I actually enjoyed her distress—Don't call me ill-natured: for tho' Avon was wrong, he is a worthy fellow, and she certainly pushed her resentment too far—Resentment is a passion highly unbecoming in the fair sex; it robs the most beautiful woman of half her charms, and often hinders admiration from ripening into love.—This lovely creature, however, enchanted me, while I condemned her.—

She

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She turned from me, as if desirous of hiding her emotions, and then asked me if I was serious—"Is my lord really ill; or have he and you together concerted a scheme to bring me back to London, and to draw me in to place a confidence in a man who has already so grossly deceived me?"

"Faith, my lady," said I, "what I have said with regard to his lordship's illness, is absolutely true; nor have we concerted any scheme together, of which we ought to be ashamed: the state of the case is plainly this—Lord Avon is but a little way off, and is so very much indisposed, that the continuation of your indifference and your anger, will certainly put an end to his life."—

"Where, where is he?—I will go to him,"—said she, excessively fluttered.

"Hold, madam," said I, "it will be better for you to let him come to you, if you please; for I cannot answer for the consequences of such an interview—

Discre-

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Discretion requires it to be in your own house, in which he can be more easily accommodated than upon the road."

"Aye, that's true," replied she; "but can he travel so much farther? No—no—I'll go to him."

"My dear lady Avon," said Olivia, bursting into tears, and flying to take her round the neck, "How this consideration for him makes me honour you!"

Was not that prettily said by Olivia, Ackworth? But she is a sweet, gentle creature—However, I still insisted upon bringing my friend home.

"Be quick then, Sir," cried my lady—hasten yourself, "but do not hurry my dear lord, Mr. Mountney."

I told her ladyship that he might depend upon my care; but that her kindness and condescension would be the only efficacious remedies for the preservation of a life which hung upon her lips.

I then returned to my friend, who changed colour when she saw me approach.

"Will

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“Will she see me?” said he, faintly:
“Oh! tell me; if she will not see me, I have nothing to do but to leave a world in which I am certain of being supremely wretched.”

I desired him to rouse his spirits, and to hope the best—I did not chuse to say too much about her altered carriage, her promising behaviour, lest she should wear another face when he made his appearance. Besides, I knew that the meeting would be, on both sides, affecting; for he was so touched with my bidding him prepare to go to Thorn-Wood, that I was forced to give him some drops, to put him into a condition to set out.

At last we arrived.

I led my lord to her feet, for he could not support himself, pale, trembling, and disordered as he was all over.—

He just reached her as she rose to receive him, and then sunk upon the floor, without speaking a single word.

She

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She seemed exceedingly shocked at the sight of him in such a situation.

I endeavoured to raise him, while the gentle Olivia reached a chair.

Eudocia sat down in it, and stooping to my lord, laid his head on her lap—Then, taking his hands in hers, she pressed them frequently to her lips.

Opening his languid eyes, on receiving those unexpected proofs of her tenderness, he closed them again, while he grasped her hands, and cried, with a deep sigh, “Can my Eudocia forgive me?”

“She can, she can—She does, my lord,” replied she, stifling her emotions as much as possible.—

She then turned to Olivia, and said, “Do, my dear, order a bed to be prepared this moment.” — “You don’t sit very easy there,” continued she to him; “do, Mr. Mountney, help me to raise my lord.”—

I assisted her immediately, and we led him to a sofa, on which she sat down by him,

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him, threw her white arm round his neck, and while he reclined on her shoulder, called him her love, her life, her dear Harry.

I cannot describe his sensations ; I can only say that they were too violent to be endured ; he fainted away upon her bosom.—

As soon as he recovered his senses, he was carried to bed—She sat by his side, with his hand fast locked in her's, while he poured forth, tho' in a feeble voice, the warmest effusions of gratitude and love for her returning kindness.

Upon my soul, Ackworth, they touched me in the tenderest part, and I am not given to the melting mood neither.—But I could have been glad to have been so caressed by the fair Olivia.

I begin to have a strange inclination to sit down with a kind girl, in a quiet corner somewhere.

Prithee answer the question I asked before all this bustle happened, if you can—

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can--Is it possible for Sedley to be in earnest with Olivia; or is she only employed as a convenient person to facilitate his ungenerous designs, to speak of them in the softest terms?

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.